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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was conducted of three adult literacy and basic skills programs in Ontario (Canada) to identify the type and nature of clients served and services provided by the programs. Research methodology included mailed questionnaires (n=150, 78 percent returned), 92 personal and telephone interviews with instructors and administrators of literacy programs, and 539 telephone interviews with former and current participants in the three programs. Some of the findings of the study are as follows: (1) the three programs (Ontario Basic Skills, Ontario Community Literacy, and Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace) provide differing services according to their objectives; (2) the three programs serve different but overlapping groups of people; (3) most of the program participants felt they had achieved improved reading skills and gains in self-confidence; (4) generally, the programs were well matched to their clientele and provided helpful services; and (5) most participants saw positive job-related benefits resulting from their participation in the programs. Recommendations included the following: encouraging participants to increase the time spent in the programs, upgrading teachers' skills, assessing learning disabilities, and developing literacy materials and methods and evaluation methods. (Three appendices are attached: list of persons interviewed, discussion of government's role in literacy in Ontario, and a report on literacy training needs of specific population groups.) (KC)

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Evaluation of Literacy and Basic Skills Initiatives

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MINISTRY OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

EVALUATION OF LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVES

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MINISTRY OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

EVALUATION OF LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Ministry of Skills Development (MSD) has been designated the lead agency in Ontario for literacy initiatives and is responsible for funding three literacy programs.

- **Ontario Basic Skills (OBS)** provides adult literacy, numeracy, and basic skills and is administered by Ontario's community colleges. OBS also makes funds available to offset participant expenses such as child care, transportation, and accommodation. It had approximately 12,000 participants in the 1987-88 fiscal year and was allocated $20.0 million in 1987-88.
- **Ontario Community Literacy (OCL)** is a program which provides support to approximately 150 community-based literacy projects. A considerable number of these projects are in the initial stages of developing their programs. Funding may apply directly to support a literacy project or indirectly in support of other literacy programming the agency is undertaking. Funding for 1987-88 was approximately $4.2 million.
- **Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace (OBSW)** is a relatively new program introduced in April, 1987. OBSW supports occupationally-related basic skills and second language training in the workplace. There were 24 project proposals received in 1987-88 with a program allocation of approximately $3.0 million.

The Ministry engaged Woods Gordon in association with Gerald Grant Associates, and Dr. Larry Mikulecky, Director of the Learning Skills Centre, Indiana University, a recognized expert in literacy, to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of its three adult literacy and basic skills programs in co-ordination with a government-wide review of literacy initiatives. The objectives of the project were:

1. To obtain information from the Ministry and from providers of program services (including Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT), employers, unions and non-profit community agencies) through file

surveys, mailed questionnaires and/or on-site interviews regarding the type and nature of clients served and services provided by the three programs;

2. To obtain information from program service providers and from program participants through on-site interviews and/or telephone interviews regarding the nature, effectiveness and outcomes of services provided by the three programs; and,

3. To collect and analyze the responses from these instruments, and to document the results in a report for use by the Ministry.

METHODOLOGY

The study team used an extensive range of research methods on which its conclusions and recommendations are based. The research was completed between April and August, 1988. The following were the main study methods used:

- Mail questionnaires were developed and sent to each of the community college OBS program administrators, the OCL program co-ordinators and the OBSW program co-ordinators. A total of 150 questionnaires were returned giving a 78% response rate. In addition, a number of projects wrote to the team indicating that they were only in the implementation stages and were too new to submit any data. Extensive mail and telephone follow-up was undertaken by the study team and the Ministry to encourage this high response rate.

- A total of over 90 personal and telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of each of the three programs. These included program administrators, instructors, and tutors. In addition, the team interviewed 19 representatives from the Ministry of Skills Development and one from the Ministry of Education; two group discussions were held with representatives of various literacy groups in each of Ottawa and Toronto, at which approximately 25 individuals attended. The team also held a group discussion with representatives of native programs and met with students in a group format in the college programs.

- The team conducted a total of 539 telephone interviews with former and current participants and learners from the three programs. The lists of participants/learners were selected and provided by the program co-ordinators. A number of the OCL programs have policies ensuring confidentiality of their participants and many did not submit names of individuals to be interviewed. The team interviewed all OCL participants they were able to contact. The team also met with participants and learners in group settings and observed the instruction and training as well as conducted group discussions with the participants to obtain their perspectives of the training and instruction. These group sessions included approximately 250 participants.

The following are the major findings for each of the three programs. It is premature to comment on some of the OCL programs which are in their initial stages and therefore most of the comments below are made with respect to those OCL programs which have been operating for some time.

NATURE OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY PROGRAMS

The nature of the literacy services provided by each of the programs differs considerably between each of OBS, OCL and OBSW. There also tends to be considerable variation from one organization to another within each of the programs. The following provides an overview of each program.

Ontario Basic Skills

There are three specific MSD objectives for OBS:

- to increase the basic skills especially literacy and numeracy in the Ontario work force;
- to increase the participation of those traditionally under-represented in training, e.g., women, native persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and older workers;
- to encourage women to gain an awareness of, to select, and to secure entry into training programs and occupations generally regarded as non-traditional for women.

The OBS program is the most structured of each of the programs investigated. OBS program components include 25 hours of training readiness counselling, academic upgrading in employment related literacy and numeracy training, and 10 hours of job search assistance. MSD guidelines indicate that the normal program duration per trainee is expected to be 400 hours, however, no maximum has been established. Many colleges are still confused about this guideline, and some do interpret it as a maximum. Although many colleges suggest that 400 hours is insufficient to achieve significant improvements in literacy levels, particularly for Basic level students, OBS students typically have completed approximately 253 hours on exit from the program, according to our OBS survey, although the Ministry's data suggest a much lower figure. The academic upgrading is based on an individual assessment by the college and may include English or French literacy, mathematics, science and technology, basic computer training, technical 'hands on' skills and life skills. Students from OBS can be mixed in the classroom with students funded from other programs such as the federal BTSD training.

There are four levels of instruction with the highest providing grade 12 level of competence. Colleges are required to direct 20% of their funding to the basic level. The majority of the training is in the classroom setting. In general, students may work individually from standardized exercise books and texts or may work together in group settings on specific exercises. The program textual materials and curriculum are designed by each of the colleges and there can be variation from college to college or campus to campus within a college. A student may take instruction from 10 hours (part-time) to 30 hours per week (full-time). The individual's goals are typically to obtain upgrading in order to further career goals or to pursue further education.

OBS provides special support allowances which allow qualifying learners to offset some of the costs of child care, transportation and accommodation.

The difficulty some colleges have experienced in reaching and serving individuals with basic level needs has led several colleges to contract with local OCL groups to provide basic level training to learners referred from the colleges.

The colleges appear to use more formal mechanisms than either OCL or OBSW groups to monitor and evaluate their programs. The colleges are required by the Ministry to gather intake and exit information, and training plans are typically used to monitor the on-going progress of students. OBS programs also involve significantly more formal testing of students than seen in other programs.

Ontario Community Literacy

The following are the Ministry's stated objectives for Ontario Community Literacy program:

> Ontario Community Literacy objectives are to enhance the development and delivery of community-based adult basic literacy (ABL) programs and services for Ontario residents:
>
> - for whom a lack of literacy skills has been a barrier to participating fully in society;
> - who have been unable to benefit from the existing institutional delivery system.

A community group can qualify for OCL funding either to fund directly a specific literacy program or to supplement funding of existing literacy programs which the community group is running. There can be considerable variation in the type of programs run under OCL. OCL also distinguishes anglophone, francophone, native and access (handicapped) programs. Normally, the community group manages a number of volunteer tutors who work individually with learners, and although many OCL groups report no shortage of volunteer tutors, they do stress that volunteers need considerable familiarization and training before they can be expected to tutor individual learners.

In contrast to the OBS program, there is thus a high level of one on one training, which is the approach preferred by most OCL learners. Community groups may also run small group learning classes in place of or to supplement individual tutor-learner relationships. (A few groups work almost exclusively in group learning formats.) Unlike OBS and OBSW, the learner does not necessarily enter the program to improve his or her job prospects or job skills. The community groups use the term 'learner centred model' to describe the heavy orientation of the program to each individual's needs.

Community groups typically work with a number of volunteer tutors who may spend up to about 3 hours per week with the learner. The tutor and learner will schedule their meetings at mutually convenient times and locations. The role of program co-ordinators is to supervise and manage these relationships, as well as administer the program.

As community groups often work with individuals who may be disadvantaged and who have very basic literacy skills, there is usually a need for the group, or the tutor, to spend time providing informal social support to the learner, and this support is seen as critical to ensure the long term success of the program. This support may simply be encouragement, but also may be concerned with getting help with matters such as housing, welfare or daycare. Some of the community groups (e.g., Laubach Literacy) have highly structured learning materials, but most groups tend to be considerably more catholic in their choice of learning materials depending particularly on the needs of the individual, which are explored early on in the process.

Francophone literacy groups offer a different approach to that of other OCL programs, stressing recognition of the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the francophone community in their approach. Francophone groups, although many are still in the early stages of development, differ also in instructional methodology by preferring a group setting, and the use of paid instructors instead of volunteer tutors.

There are also a number of native literacy groups who offer literacy services to the native community, which is estimated to have an illiteracy rate of 56%. These native groups see themselves as providing culturally specific literacy services which incorporate native learning styles, a group approach and a strong community focus in their approach.

Compared to colleges and employers, the community groups are less inclined to follow strict reporting mechanisms as they have multiple sources of funding and are reluctant to fill out extensive paperwork for each funding organization. Many have their own boards of directors to whom they are first accountable. This is true both in terms of setting objectives as well as reporting on the success in meeting these objectives. Some of these organizations, however, track program statistics for other funders.

OCL projects tend to base their monitoring and evaluation on informal methods, such as observation, and hand-written file records. Formal testing of students tends to be avoided in order not to remind students of previous unpleasant education experiences. Instead, the ongoing progress of students is monitored by the tutors who in turn are in regular contact with the program co-ordinators. Community groups have fewer resources to allocate to monitoring and evaluation and thus are less able to gather extensive statistical information on their programs relative to colleges.

Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace

The OBSW objectives are as follows:

- to increase the basic skills especially literacy and numeracy in the Ontario work force;
- to increase the communication skills of those workers with English and French fluency skills less than adequate for safe and efficient functioning in the workplace;
- to increase the participation of those traditionally under-represented in training, e.g., women, native persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and older workers;
- to encourage women to gain an awareness of, to select, and to secure entry into training programs and occupations generally regarded as non-traditional for women.

TABLE 1

ONTARIO NON-LITERATE POPULATION VS. MSD LITERACY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

COMPARISONS BY CHARACTERISTIC

CHARACTERISTIC	*ONTARIO**	*OBS*	*DIFFERENCE OBS-ONT*	*OCL*	*DIFFERENCE OCL-ONT*	*OBSW***	*DIFFERENCE OBSW-ONT*	*PARTICIPANT SURVEY****	*DIFFERENCE PARTIC-ONT*
EDUCATION									
Less than Gr. 5	7%	12%	5%	25%	18%	15%	8%	10%	3%
Gr.5-8	33%	26%	-7%	35%	2%	69%	36%	20%	-13%
Some High School	28%	44%	16%	29%	1%	16%	-12%	59%	31%
Gr12+	32%	19%	-13%	11%	-21%	0%	-32%	10%	-22%
ETHNIC ORIGIN									
ENGLISH	41%	52%	11%	55%	14%	7%	-34%	47%	6%
FRENCH	12%	7%	-5%	7%	-5%	1%	-11%	10%	-2%
OTHER WESTERN EUROPE	25%	14%	-11%	11%	-14%	23%	-2%	17%	-8%
NATIVE INDIAN	1%	3%	2%	10%	9%	7%	6%	6%	5%
OTHER	22%	24%	2%	17%	-5%	62%	40%	20%	-2%
LANGUAGE FIRST SPOKEN									
ENGLISH	63%	65%	2%	70%	7%	6%	-57%	64%	1%
FRENCH	8%	8%	0%	7%	-1%	0%	-8%	9%	1%
OTHER	29%	26%	-3%	23%	-6%	94%	65%	25%	-4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS									
EMPLOYED PT/FT	46%	39%	-7%	44%	-2%	91%	45%	48%	2%
UNEMPLOYED	54%	61%	7%	56%	2%	9%	-45%	51%	-3%
SHORT TERM (UI)	-	11%	-	9%	-	91%	-	5%	-
LONG TERM (SAR)	-	25%	-	24%	-	9%	-	22%	-
OTHER UNEMPLOYED	-	25%	-	22%	-	1%	-	26%	-
DISABILITY									
MENTAL/LEARNING	3%	4%	1%	8%	5%	-	-	-	-
PHYSICAL^	25%	5%	-20%	3%	-22%	-	-	-	-
HEALTH RELATED^^	9%	3%	-6%	2%	-7%	-	-	-	-
ANY OF THE ABOVE	25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	19%	-6%

Source: Literacy in Ontario, Creative Research Group, June, 1988

** Note: Sample size is eleven OBSW programs

*** Figures may not add due to "not stated" responses

^ Includes physical disability, eye trouble, speech, hearing problem

^^For Ontario, defined as long term illness of 6 months or more

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The OBSW program is normally delivered in the workplace in group settings. The program is fairly new and materials tend to be developed for each workplace setting. Some union organizations have taken the initiative in developing OBSW programs.

A considerable amount of the training provided by employers is English as a Second Language (ESL) type training. This material will usually be supplemented using examples from the employer's workplace. Normally, the programs will be scheduled to allow for a combination of employer and employee time. The typical program runs from 25 to 50 hours.

OBSW programs also tend to rely on informal methods of monitoring and evaluation. Most employers expect the instructors to be responsible for this function and tend to rely on observation for monitoring their own program. Unions are more likely to use formal monitoring and evaluation tools than employers.

TYPE, NATURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF GROUPS SERVED BY LITERACY PROGRAMS

Table 1 opposite shows a profile of the clients in each program in comparison with a profile of Ontario's illiterate population.[1] The following are a number of conclusions based on this and other data.

- The three literacy programs serve different, yet overlapping target groups. In general, the OCL groups tend to serve individuals with more basic levels of literacy instructional needs (i.e., below grade 9) relative to the colleges. Our interviews indicate that a number of individuals who have very basic literacy needs or who are older may not feel comfortable in this institutional environment.
- A comparison of the age groups served by the Ministry's literacy programs with the age groups in the Ontario labour force shows that, relatively, the literacy programs are serving mainly those in the 25 to 44 age groups; workers older than 55 tend to be under-represented.
- Native peoples who experience literacy problems are well-represented relative to their overall numbers, while francophones appear to be marginally under-represented in MSD's programs.

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[1] *Literacy in Ontario*, The Creative Research Group, prepared for the Ministry of Skills Development, June, 1988. This was a re-analysis for the Province of Ontario of the study, *Literacy in Canada*, conducted on behalf of Southam News. This is Ontario's only comprehensive source of literacy data.

- Some programs have been established to provide services to individuals with learning disabilities, mental and physical disabilities and related special needs. However, most groups state they do not screen for learning disabilities in a formal manner, and have difficulty finding appropriate materials or providing services to these individuals. The disabled as a whole appear to be under-represented in MSD literacy programs.
- All programs would appear to be providing at least 15% English as a Second Language (ESL) type training or English as a Second Dialect (ESD) training. This is particularly true for OBSW which serves a high proportion of ESL type workers, and in some colleges where many participants are new immigrants who have completed a basic ESL course and are using the OBS program as an advanced type of ESL training. Colleges, and OCL groups in Toronto are serving more ESL students than other programs because of the proportionately higher number of immigrants in Toronto relative to the rest of Ontario.
- Most programs which have been established for some time, report a fairly high level of demand for their programs. As a result of limited resources available, some colleges are having to make decisions concerning which groups they will serve in the OBS program.

There is a wide variety of approaches to delivering literacy programs in Ontario, both between and within programs at the local level. The following are general observations based on aggregate data for each of the programs.

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

In evaluating the program effectiveness, the team reviewed four conceptual approaches to the evaluation. These included reviews of program outcomes from the following perspectives:

1. Perspective of the Program Co-ordinators and Participants;
2. Literacy Levels Achieved in Each Program;
3. Employment and Further Training Outcomes Achieved;
4. Achievement of Ministry's Stated Program Objectives.

Perspective of Program Co-ordinators and Participants

Program Co-ordinators

It should be noted that the program co-ordinators perceive success differently from each other. The colleges tend to be more 'numbers' oriented and monitor a number of variables such as individuals who completed their training plans as compared. Because of their emphasis on the learner-centred model, the community groups adopt a more qualitative approach to the whole question of learner success and achievement. In the extreme, some groups view any participation in their programs as a 'success' regardless of the outcomes achieved. The employers and unions view success as improving the workplace skills of its workers; for employers this applies especially to the communication skills of those whose mother tongue is not english or french.

Participant Views on Programs

From the perspective of the program participants, many learners enter the programs with a wide variety of personal goals in mind. Based on the participant survey, reasons relating to self improvement were the most often cited for taking the training. OBS participants tend to be more job oriented in the reasons given for taking training as compared with the OCL participants. Most of the participants cited improvements in their reading (24%) and gains in self confidence (24%) as the ways training had helped them. Only 6% mentioned that the training had helped or will help in getting them a job.

OBS

- Past participants are positive about the OBS program. Many view self-improvement and job-related skills as main objectives of participating, and many went on to further technical and secondary school level training

OCL

- Participants appear to be satisfied with OCL projects. Gains in self-confidence were the main outcome seen by the majority of respondents. Many also saw an improvement in their employment status. Many learners have very specific and short-term goals, e.g. obtaining a driver's license, reading the newspaper.

OBSW

- It was not possible to obtain sufficient participant views in the OBSW as employers and unions were unable to provide names. Employers were unwilling to release names as most learners were ESL students and would not be able to successfully conduct a telephone interview, or group discussion with our study team.

Literacy Levels Achieved in Each Program

Research has shown that effective literacy and basic skills programs are characterized by a few key principles:

- A significant amount of practice time actually reading and carrying out mathematics exercises is required for gain to occur. (Although no strict guidelines apply, it has been suggested that about 100 hours of such practice time is required to achieve one grade gain.)
- For practice to be effective, learners should be matched to material that is neither too simple nor too difficult for them.
- For the most effective transfer to occur, learners should practice using materials and approaches similar to those they will face in the near future, (e.g., manuals, charts, memos, forms for the workplace, materials used in day to day activities and textbooks similar to future academic class texts, etc.)
- Teachers and tutors should be readily available and active in clarifying misunderstandings.

If the above principles are in place, the amount of time required to provide one grade level of gain can be reduced from 100 hours to approximately half that time. For the purposes of this evaluation, we have used *grade level gain* as a common proxy, recognizing that different literacy organizations may have other approaches to measuring individual learner progress in literacy levels. Other approaches using different gradations are equally valid. We also recognize that this does not recognize the number of hours spent reading and writing by individuals on their own time, which was not measured in this study.

In discussing each of the literacy programs, we have been guided by the above principles to help serve as a framework for the analysis and evaluation.

Nature of OBS Services Provided in the Context of the Evaluation Principles

- English and literacy training characteristically make up about half the OBS training time. Typically, English is scheduled for about 3 hours per day in an OBS program. Our observations of the program indicate that approximately one hour to one and a half hours of this time would be spent actually reading. The individual would therefore receive approximately 100 hours of reading in the program which allows for approximately one grade level of gain in a 400 hour program. However, the average OBS learner exits the program after having received only 253 hours.
- Some colleges in Metro especially have high numbers of individuals with ESL training needs. The English training may have a high level of grammar training as a result.
- The mathematics classes observed usually allowed for individuals to work on problem sets 90% or more of the time they were in class. The mathematics time is therefore very efficiently used, and hence the mathematics training is very effective.

- College instructors, for the most part have not had specialized training in teaching methods for adult literacy. In some colleges, teachers may be transferred from unrelated teaching areas to the OBS program because of cut-backs in other college department budgets.

- Materials used tend not to be matched to the workplace skills requirements or future classes, but tend to be standard problem solving texts.

- The colleges reported difficulty obtaining teaching materials, especially workplace-related, for those with basic level literacy needs.

- Teachers tend to give high quality feedback to learners, but the size of the classes in some colleges and discussions with students indicated a need for more access to teacher help.

Nature of OCL Services Provided in the Context of Evaluation Principles

- Generally there is a good matching of materials to learner needs, as one might expect from a program which tailors tutoring to individuals' own needs and goals. In the programs observed there was a high amount of usage of materials which would be relevant in every day life or useful in a job. These included periodicals, forms, public transit maps, bank statements, etc.

- The use of individual tutors for each learner provides a high level of feedback for clarification of individual problems. A sustained learner tutor relationship of high quality clearly is critical for the long term success and progress of the learner. Community groups are very conscious of this and exercise considerable care in training the tutors and in matching tutors and learners and nurturing this relationship. Some groups prefer to supplement the one on one instruction with small group settings to provide further reinforcement and support.

- Because there is a relatively small amount of supervision by the organization itself, a great deal depends on each learner and the tutor in terms of the overall long term possibility for sustained development. The tutor and learner work out how often they get together which is typically from 2 to 3 hours per week. The questionnaire data of program participants indicate that the average duration of learners in the programs is 69 hours. Discussions with learners indicate that approximately 50% to 75% of this time is spent in actually reading. Assuming a tutor and learner meet over the course of a year on a weekly basis, this would provide approximately 50 to 75 hours of reading time which would allow for one level of grade gain assuming the materials are at the right degree of complexity. What is less clear, from our interviews, is the degree to which the programs are able to retain their learners over the long term and the regularity of the meetings between the tutor and learner. This information is not often documented very well by the community groups since it is up to the tutor and learner to make their own arrangements. Inspection of a few individual files and discussions with learners indicate that it is unlikely that all learners are able to meet as regularly as once a week over a sustained period. Some programs, however, have been successful in keeping their learners for a sustained period of time (6 months to a year or more).

Nature of OBSW Services Provided in the Context of Evaluation Criteria

- Usually the materials used in an OBSW program are relevant to the workplace environment. Often, a considerable amount of the OBSW program is ESL type training. ESL type training is acceptable within the program design which has as one of its objectives the improvement of the communication skills of those with inadequate English or French. The length of the training is typically between 25 to 50 hours of which a considerable amount is oral training. In comparison with the OBS and OCL programs, this does not allow for much improvement in overall levels of literacy.

Discussion of Literacy Evaluation Principles

The following table summarizes the duration of training and the attrition rate in each of the programs.

Outcomes*	**OBS**	**OCL**	**OBSW**
Number of organizations	22	146	24
Number of learners served per year (Average per organization, 1987/88)	566	74	254
Average hours instruction per learner	253	69	33
% lost due to attrition	38%	30%E	25%E
% served less than 20 hours	2%	20%E	80%E
% served less than 50 hours	6%	50%E	90%
% served less than 100 hours	10%	90%E	95%
% to employment/further training	82%	NA	NA

*Reported by program co-ordinators
E-Estimate
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

The programs do not consistently measure gains in levels of reading and basic skills achieved, and for this reason, the Ministry does not have access to information which assesses reading and basic skill level gains. The amount of time which learners are spending in the programs does not allow for more than about one or two grade levels gain in reading and other basic skills on average. It is possible for some learners to accelerate at a faster rate if they spend considerable time reading outside the classroom time. The current levels of reading improvement achieved are likely to be most effective if it allows the individual to obtain a level of functional literacy or provides enough training to allow entry into other types of training programs.

Employment and Further Training Outcomes Achieved

According to the participants surveyed, 59% of OBS participants and 36% of OCL participants proceeded to further training after completing the programs.

Many participants saw positive job-related benefits resulting from their participation in the programs:

Incidence of "Yes" Answers By Program (%)

Benefit^	**OBS** (N=357)	**OCL*** (N=172)
To get a job	52.9	66.9
To get a job in right field	41.5	50.0
To get a promotion	34.2	49.4
To do job better	47.1	69.2
To increase income	40.1	56.4
To access further training	75.1	75.6
No benefit	5.6	6.4

Notes: *OCL respondents were selected by program co-ordinators.
^Responses indicate benefit already seen or anticipated in future.
Source: Woods Gordon participant survey

These data are somewhat higher than the data reported by the program co-ordinators. OBS program co-ordinators reported that 31% of those who exit the program have employment or a confirmed prospect, 11% are seeking employment, 11% are seeking further training and 9% are not seeking training. Approximately 38% were unknown employment status at exit. The OCL program co-ordinators reported that 13% of those unemployed obtained employment at exit and another 13% were seeking further training.

Achievement of Ministry's Stated Program Objectives

The colleges, for the most part, are meeting the objectives of the OBS program as determined by the Ministry. The extent to which they are encouraging women to enter non-traditional occupations is not clear. College OBS objectives also are fairly consistent with the Ministry's stated objectives. Community groups are generally meeting their stated program objectives. The OBSW programs are meeting most of the Ministry's objectives although there is little orientation of women to non-traditional occupations. Also, the majority of the employer training is ESL type training.

The table below summarizes the extent to which the three MSD literacy programs meet the evaluation principles described above.

Evaluation Principles	OBS	OCL	OBSW
MSD objectives achieved?	Yes	Yes	Some
MSD + program objectives consistent?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Training job oriented?	Yes	Some	Yes

In general, it appears that the programs are achieving the Ministry's objectives, although less so in the OBSW program than in OBS or OCL, and the reported objectives of individual projects in each of the three programs also appear, for the most part, to be consistent with Ministry objectives and the programs. Literacy services offered in all three programs appear to be related to training skills, although this is perceived by OCL programs to be somewhat less an important objective by program co-ordinators relative to OBS and OCL.

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

The following section outlines two measures of cost-effectiveness for each program, i.e., contact hour cost and the annual allocation per learner. The reader is cautioned in drawing comparisons between the various programs since the nature of the program is considerably different in each case.

OBS

- The cost per contact hour for OBS according to our survey is $6.66 which is equivalent to the data provided by the Ministry. The allocation per learner is $1,684.

- The request for information on costs of other college programs received a limited response. Costs for Futures were provided by 5 colleges and are shown as $12.37. It should be noted that this program design differs form OBS in that a training allowance is paid to the learner. The cost of BTSD as reported by 7 colleges is $6.85 per learner contact hour which is very close that of OBS.

OCL

- The cost per learner contact hour from the questionnaire data is $6.25. This cost varies individually by age of program, as the newer programs (less than one year old) have costs in the order of $12 per contact hour.
- It is important to note that the total costs of OCL training are actually higher than this figure would suggest, because OCL groups receive approximately 70% of their funding from MSD. When funding from all sources is taken into account, total contact hour costs are closer to $8.70.
- The allocation per learner is in the order of $429, which is approximately one-quarter that of OBS.

OBSW

- The cost per contact hour of OBSW is approximately $13. This calculation does not take into account the Metro Labour Council program as they did not provide us with this information. In this context, the OBSW cost per contact hour is considerably higher than that seen in OBS and OCL. Allocation per learner was calculated to be $181 on average for OBSW projects.

All groups reported that they felt their programming was constrained by the funding available to them.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In evaluating the effectiveness of the different programs, it is important to recognize there are different approaches to literacy which each group philosophically is addressing. While the colleges tend to see literacy more or less from the institutional perspective, the community groups tend to see literacy more broadly from the perspective of the individual's day to-day needs in society. There are a number of different definitions in the literature which reflect these different perspectives. The common purpose of literacy programs is to increase learners' reading and numeracy abilities over time. If the Ministry acknowledges that the development of reading and numeracy skills are key goals, it must design the programs and develop measures to maximize and assess progress in order to ensure that its objectives are being achieved.

As has been discussed, literacy training can be very effective if the materials are oriented to the needs of the individual learner. On this score, the community groups perform well. Further, considerable practice time by the learner must be undertaken for substantial literacy gains to occur. While co-ordinators can cite specific examples where individuals also work hard on their own, there is no evidence to suggest that this is common throughout the programs. While some gain is occurring, it would not appear to be more than one or two grade gains on average based on the time learners are spending in the programs. These improvements in literacy are likely to be most useful if it takes the learner to the stage where he or she can become functionally literate or to the stage where the individual can become eligible for entry to a job or further training (i.e., grades 8 to 10 for apprenticeship type training or grade 12 for further post-secondary training). In order for substantial improvements in literacy to occur, there must be a concerted attempt to retain learners in all the literacy programs.

Although representatives of all three programs claim that individual participants are monitored and assessed in terms of their progress at reading and writing, there is no evidence that such monitoring and assessment is applied on a consistent basis across the programs, or that any such assessments are sent to the Ministry in any useful format. In the absence of such assessments, the proxy we have used to assess whether substantial gains in literacy have occurred has been the use of 100 hours of practice time which is considered necessary to achieve one grade gain equivalent at reading. Clearly, this is not a hard and fast rule which should be applied to assess the progress of participants, but merely a guide to judge the increase in literacy levels of participants. Research has shown that this practice time can be reduced considerably if learning materials are matched to the needs of the learner, if learners' practice using the materials that they will use in the future and if teachers and tutors are readily available to clarify misunderstandings.

All three programs have strengths and weaknesses in terms of their literacy accomplishments. Many of the different approaches meet different sets of needs, it is not possible to deliver literacy training solely through one model. For example, certain groups such as francophone and native learners advocated strongly that they have unique literacy and basic training needs which are culturally specific and require special approaches. From the Ministry's perspective, the issue is to co-ordinate and control the different approaches while ensuring that substantial literacy training is taking place. The possibility of co-ordination of different groups is strongest in the urban centres where there are a number of different organizations engaged in delivering literacy programs. The Ministry must also ensure that groups in remote areas have access to literacy programs in line with their own needs.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR ALL PROGRAMS

- Design programs to encourage learners and participants to maximize their time engaged in the programs and in actually doing reading.
- Develop simple materials for very basic needs. These should include more real world and work-related materials and applications.
- Improve the quality of materials for all literacy programs and its orientation to the future needs of the individual. Businesses could be approached to fund the development of such materials and there would likely be good demand for these materials by all organizations.
- Provide training materials to instructors on up-to-date methods of teaching literacy and basis skills.
- Increase reading as a component of all programs, both during the instruction time and as a supplement when not engaged in instruction.
- Develop mechanisms to detect and assess those with learning disabilities and to design programs to meet their needs. Training programs should also be developed to assist program co-ordinators and others engaged in literacy training to assist in identifying these specialist needs.
- Develop materials and methods to assess and measure literacy and numeracy levels at entry and at periodic intervals in all programs. The assessment need not be a formal 'test'. (These materials could be similar to the kinds of tests which were developed for the Southam study.) Most of the participants we interviewed did not express any aversion to testing and most were interested in determining the literacy levels they were at. This information should be provided in a meaningful format to the Ministry and the reports should be available to the organizations engaged in the literacy training.

- Develop organizational mechanisms to co-ordinate the delivery of literacy training to the local level in areas where there are a number of organizations engaged in providing literacy training. In areas where this has occurred, organizations have been successful in working together to provide more cost-effective training to some groups or in complementing the provision of services to some groups or in simply learning from each other.

Suggested Improvements for OBS

- Encourage more reading which is job-related. (e.g., journals, manuals, charts, memos, correspondence, forms from the workplace, textbooks similar to future classes, etc. Employers can also be asked to contribute materials.) This can be facilitated with no changes to class size. The students can be encouraged to do work in their own interest areas, for example, for one day each week or for a portion of a day. This can be facilitated with no changes to class size. The involvement of local businesses also serves to provide employers with an understanding of the services and capabilities of the colleges.

- Explore ways of increasing student access to volunteer tutors.

Suggested Improvements for OCL

- For the benefit of both OCL participants and the Ministry, the learners need to have some form of monitoring and assessment process which needs to be applied on a consistent basis to track the programs and the learner's progress. There are a number of different assessment tools which are relatively simple, not threatening and which could be used by the programs.

Suggested Improvements for OBSW

- Encourage more long term training by using trained tutors in the workplace.

- Encourage shared employer/employee time model.

- Improve marketing of program, perhaps through CITC and industry associations.

MINISTRY OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

EVALUATION OF LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVES

1.0 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The Ministry of Skills Development (MSD) has been designated the lead agency in Ontario for literacy initiatives and is responsible for funding three literacy programs.

- **Ontario Basic Skills (OBS)** provides adult literacy, numeracy, and basic skills and is administered by Ontario's community colleges. It had approximately 12,000 participants in the 1987-88 fiscal year and was allocated approximately $20.0 million in 1987-88.
- **Ontario Community Literacy (OCL)** is a program which provides support to approximately 150 community-based literacy projects. Funding may apply directly to support a literacy project or indirectly in support of other literacy programming the agency is undertaking. Funding for 1987-88 was $4.2 million.
- **Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace (OBSW)** is a relatively new program introduced in April, 1987. OBSW supports employer and union-sponsored occupationally-related basic skills and second language training in the workplace. There were 24 project proposals in 1987-88 with a program allocation of approximately $3.0 million.

The Ministry engaged Woods Gordon in association with Gerald Grant Associates and Dr. Larry Mikulecky, Director of the Learning Skills Centre, Indiana University, and a recognized expert in literacy to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of its three adult literacy and basic skills programs in co-ordination with a government-wide review of literacy initiatives. The objectives of the project were:

1. To obtain information from the Ministry and from providers of program services (including Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, employers, unions and non-profit community agencies) through file surveys, mailed questionnaires and/or on-site interviews regarding the type and nature of clients served and services provided by the three programs;
2. To obtain information from program service providers and from program participants through on-site interviews and/or telephone interviews

regarding the nature, effectiveness and outcomes of services provided by the three programs; and,

3. To collect and analyze the responses from these instruments, and to document the results in a report for the use of the Ministry.

The study was to provide information in a number of broad areas of interest to the Ministry regarding the three literacy and basic skills programs. These included:

1) Type, Nature and Distribution of Clients by Program
2) Nature of Services Provided by Programs
3) Program Outcome Measurement
4) Effectiveness of Services Provided

Our report addresses each of these areas.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study team used an extensive range of research instruments to develop its conclusions and recommendations. The following were the main approaches which were used for each of the participants in the project. The fieldwork was carried out between April and August of 1988.

2.1 INTERVIEW PROGRAM

Over the course of the study we conducted 49 personal interviews, 43 telephone interviews and 4 group workshops (40 groups represented) with literacy service providers and Ministry staff in Toronto. This was composed of the following:

- **Government:** Personal interviews were conducted with 19 senior staff from MSD and one representative from the Ministry of Education;
- **OBS Programs:** A combination of personal on-site interviews and telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of 20 community colleges;
- **OCL Programs:** The team conducted 16 personal on-site interviews and 17 telephone interviews with representatives of OCL projects. These included program administrators, tutors and board members. The team also interviewed several representatives of projects targeted to specific groups or communities, such as francophone groups, native groups, and groups catering to individuals with special needs;
- **OBSW Programs:** The team conducted 4 personal interviews and 16 telephone interviews with employer representatives responsible for OBSW programs, as well as a focus group session with representatives of the 3 union sponsors;
- **Group Workshops:** The team conducted two workshops, one each in Ottawa and Toronto, which included representatives from a large number of literacy-related organizations, as well as a group session with

representatives of native literacy groups. The Ottawa workshop was conducted both in English and French.

INTERVIEWS COMPLETED

Program	Personal Interviews	Telephone Interviews	Group Workshops
Ministry	20	N/A	N/A
OBS	9	11	N/A
OCL	16	17	3(37)*
OBSW	4	16	1(3)
TOTAL	49	44	4(40)

*()Total number of organizations represented

2.2 MAIL QUESTIONNAIRES

A detailed questionnaire for each of the three programs was designed, reviewed with Ministry of Skills Development staff, and then distributed to every operational project funded by the Ministry under OBS, OCL or OBSW. A French translation of the OCL questionnaire was also prepared, reviewed with MSD's Literacy Branch staff, and then distributed to the Francophone OCL groups. Each questionnaire was pre-tested with a representative group of each program. The questionnaires requested information regarding activities occurring during the period April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988. The questionnaires were mailed in May, 1988 with collection of the questionnaires occurring until mid July, 1988.

We received a total of 150 returned questionnaires out of 193 sent, resulting in an overall response rate for the mailed questionnaires of 78%. Individual response rates for the mail questionnaires were as follows:

Program	Number Sent	Responses	Response Rate
OBS	22	22	100%
OCL	147	116	79%
Francophone	23	16	70%
Native	27	18	67%
OBSW	24	12	50%
Total	193	150	78%

Obtaining this high response rate was the result of:

- extensive contact in advance of the mailing and follow-up by both the study team and MSD Staff
- interest by groups in the results of the study

The majority of groups which did not respond to the questionnaire were OCL and OBSW groups that were in their start-up phase and did not feel that they could satisfactorily complete the questionnaires.

2.3 LEARNER SURVEY

We have also conducted a telephone survey of past and current participants of the three programs. The purpose of this was to gain the qualitative perceptions of learners regarding the appropriateness of program delivery, teaching approaches, and some feedback on the post-program experiences of the learners.

Obtaining the names and telephone numbers of past program participants was achieved by telephone contact with each organization after each group had received a letter from the

Ministry notifying them in advance that we would be calling for this information. Obtaining the names, however, proved to be a more difficult task than originally anticipated, as many groups, particularly in the OCL and OBSW programs were reluctant to release names for reasons of confidentiality. Many groups wished to pre-screen potential respondents prior to our making contact with them. This clearly limited our ability to conduct a truly random sample of participants.

In addition, some OBSW groups were not inclined to release names of participants for reasons similar to those described above, but also because the majority of participants in employer-sponsored programs were ESL students and thus, telephone interviews would not have generated much useful information. The union based programs were also unwilling to release names for telephone interviews, and would have allowed personal visits but as the programs were not running during the summer this was not possible to complete within the timeframe of the study.

In sum we completed a total of 539 telephone interviews with learners, including a pre-test of 51 interviews. The interviews were distributed across the programs as follows:

Program	**Completed Interviews**
OBS	357
OCL	172
OBSW	10
Total	539

The interviews took, on average, twenty to twenty-five minutes, and we were pleased to discover that the participants were quite willing to talk about their experiences with the respective programs. The majority of learners (78.5%) interviewed by telephone were learners who had participated in a program during the 1987-88 fiscal year.

As a result of concern raised by various groups over telephone interviews, we also conducted a number of on-site focus groups with current learners both in OCL projects and colleges to supplement the information gathered from the telephone survey. In total, we met with between 200-250 current learners over the course of these visits.

2.4 CONCERNS RAISED DURING THE STUDY

The evaluation raised a number of concerns, by literacy program deliverers, especially in the OCL and OBSW programs. A number of concerns were raised:

- some projects had been funded for a year or less, and therefore the co-ordinators felt that it was too early to conduct an evaluation;
- the questionnaires requested information which is not actively collected by many groups and would thus require considerable effort to generate;
- the francophone and native communities wished to ensure that the evaluation recognize their culturally-specific characteristics;
- a number of OCL groups had confidentiality policies which precluded them from releasing the names of learners and phone numbers for the participant survey;
- some groups feared that individual projects were being evaluated rather than the whole program as was the case.

As a result, we put considerable effort into going out into the field to allay the concerns of community groups and employers and adapt our approach to meet these valid concerns. This can be seen in the number of personal interviews conducted over the course of the study. For example, we met with learners in order to accommodate OCL groups who wished to have their learners participate in person in a focus group format rather than being interviewed over the telephone. We also met with the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, who suggested additional questions for the questionnaire, which were subsequently incorporated, as well as the Ontario Literacy Coalition to discuss their concerns over the evaluation.

The success shown in achieving significantly higher response rates than anticipated , particularly in the OCL program, indicates that this follow-up effort was well received by the groups concerned.

3.0 PROFILE OF THE MINISTRY'S LITERACY PROGRAMS

This section presents a brief descriptive overview of each of the Ministry's three literacy programs, Ontario Basic Skills, Ontario Community Literacy and Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace.

3.1 ONTARIO BASIC SKILLS

The Ontario Basic Skills (OBS) program was launched as part of Ontario's Training Strategy, initiated in June, 1986. The program was to be delivered through Ontario's 22 CAAT's, providing basic literacy and numeracy instruction from the most basic level through to Grade 12 level of competence. It replaced the Technical Upgrading Program.

There are three specific MSD objectives for OBS:

- to increase the basic skills especially literacy and numeracy in the Ontario work force;
- to increase the participation of those traditionally under-represented in training, e.g., women, native persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and older workers;
- to encourage women to gain an awareness of, to select, and to secure entry into training programs and occupations generally regarded as non-traditional for women.

The OBS program is the most structured of each of the programs investigated. The program is modular, learning intensive, and available both part-time and full-time to adults 25 years or older, with an expected normal duration of 400 hours or 16 weeks, although no maximum has been established. OBS program components include 25 hours of training readiness counselling, academic upgrading in employment related literacy and numeracy training, and 10 hours of job search assistance. The academic upgrading is based on an individual assessment by the college and may include English or French literacy, mathematics, science and technology, basic computer training, technical 'hands on' skills and life skills. Students from OBS can be mixed in the classroom with students funded from other programs such as the federal BTSD training. The main focus of the program is to "broaden accessibility to training through raising the literacy/numeracy level of the educationally disadvantaged as it relates to the workplace."

There are four levels of instruction with the highest providing grade 12 level of competence. Colleges are required to direct 20% of their funding to the basic level, defined in MSD guidelines as those learners with less than Grade 9 education or Basic levels I or II. The majority of the training is in the classroom setting. In general, students may work individually from standardized exercise books and texts or may work together in group settings on specific exercises. The program textual materials and curriculum are designed by each of the colleges and there can be variation from college to college or campus to campus within a college. A student may take instruction from 10 hours (part-time) to 30 hours per week (full-time). The individual's goals are typically to obtain upgrading in order to further career goals or to pursue further education.

An important feature of the OBS program is the special support allowances which recognize that many potential learners are financially disadvantaged. Such support is available to learners to help offset the costs of child care, transportation, and accommodation.

Some colleges have contracted with local OCL community groups who provide literacy training to basic level learners. To date, this practice has been mainly confined to Toronto and a few other communities.

3.2 ONTARIO COMMUNITY LITERACY

The Ontario Community Literacy (OCL) program was launched by the former Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in September, 1986, following the Cabinet's approval of the allocation of $3.2 million to OCL for 86-87, to be recovered from Ontario's Training Strategy. The OCL program was transferred to the Ministry of Skills Development in November, 1987. An additional $1 million was made available to the OCL program from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in 1987-88 for special projects. The OCL objectives are:

> OCL objectives are to enhance the development and delivery of community-based adult basic literacy (ABL) programs and services for Ontario residents:
>
> - for whom a lack of literacy skills has been a barrier to participating fully in society;
> - who have been unable to benefit from the existing institutional delivery system.

The OCL program provides grants to non-profit community organizations which provide or support literacy training. In 1986/87 this program allocated funds to 107 projects, increasing to 150 projects in 1987/88. There are two types of grants: Stream A grants which support on-going training and outreach; and Stream B grants which support research and start-up activities.

The OCL program is characterized by a wide variety of approaches to community literacy services amongst the funded projects. These approaches include anglophone, francophone native, and access (handicapped) programs. Some OCL groups delivering literacy instruction have an orientation to learner groups with special needs such as the disabled, the blind and the hearing impaired. In addition to direct services, the OCL program also funds a number of organizations whose mandate is the development of regional networks which offer information and referral services to the public, learners, tutors and service providers, as well as playing roles in advocacy and public awareness.

Normally, the community group manages a number of volunteer tutors who work individually with learners. Although many OCL groups report no shortage of volunteer tutors, they stress that volunteers need considerable familiarization and training before they can be expected to tutor individual learners. Typically, the volunteer tutors may spend up to about 3 hours per week with the learner, although some OCL access groups may spend much more time. The tutor and learner will schedule their meetings at mutually convenient times and locations. The role of program co-ordinators is to supervise and manage these relationships, as well as administer the program.

In contrast to the OBS program, there is thus a high level of one on one training, which is the approach preferred by most OCL learners. Community groups may also run small group learning classes in place of or to supplement individual tutor-learner relationships. (A few groups work almost exclusively in group learning formats.) Unlike OBS and OBSW, the learner does not necessarily enter the program to improve his or her job prospects or job skills. The community groups use the term 'learner centred model' to describe the heavy orientation of the program to each individual's self-defined needs.

As community groups tend to work with individuals who may be disadvantaged and who have very basic literacy skills, there is usually a need for the group, or the tutor, to spend time providing informal social support to the learner. This support is seen by the program co-ordinators as critical to ensure the long term success of the program. This support may simply be encouragement, but also may be concerned with getting help with matters such as housing, welfare or daycare. However, in contrast to OBS and OBSW, the community groups usually do not have access to funds for child care and transportation expenses incurred by the learner.

Some of the community groups (e.g., Laubach Literacy) have highly structured learning materials, but most groups tend to be considerably more catholic in their choice of learning materials depending particularly on the needs of the individual, which are explored early on in the process.

Francophone literacy groups offer a somewhat different approach to that of other OCL programs, stressing recognition of the specific cultural and linguistic characteristics of the francophone community. Although many are still in the early stages of development, francophone groups differ also in instructional methodology by preferring a group setting, and the use of paid instructors instead of volunteer tutors.

There are also a number of native literacy groups who offer literacy services to the native community, which is estimated to have an illiteracy rate of 56%. These native groups see themselves as providing culturally specific literacy services which incorporate native learning styles, a group approach and a strong community focus in their approach.

3.3 ONTARIO BASIC SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace Program was introduced in April, 1987 as a $3 million program for adults in the workplace, providing 100% funding for allowable training sponsored by employers, employer associations, unions or employee associations. The program is delivered at worksites or other locations convenient to workers (e.g. union halls). The program was intended to be an alternative to OBS in order to broaden access to skills training, enhance the productivity of the Ontario workforce, and result in better job matching through informed career selection. The OBSW objectives are as follows:

- to increase the basic skills especially literacy and numeracy in the Ontario work force;
- to increase the communication skills of those workers with English and French fluency skills less than adequate for safe and efficient functioning in the workplace;
- to increase the participation of those traditionally under-represented in training, e.g., women, native persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and older workers;

- to encourage women to gain an awareness of, to select, and to secure entry into training programs and occupations generally regarded as non-traditional for women.

As of April, 1987, 24 programs had been funded, with 3 labour associations receiving most of the available funds. The largest funded organization (at time of writing), the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto, has set up English in the Workplace programs with 13 unions in over 50 companies, many of which are in the industrial service and garment sectors. Unions involved include the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Communication Workers of Canada (CWC), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), International Lady Garment Workers (ILGWU), United Electrical (UE), and the Steelworkers (USWA).

There are also 19 companies funded by OBSW, and two associations including an association of teachers of English as a second language (ESL), and an association which provides literacy training for unemployed native women. Six of the employer sponsors are in the automobile parts manufacturing industry as subsidiaries of the Magna group of companies. Other employers included a hotel, a chartered accounting firm and a variety of manufacturing companies. The majority of the funded OBSW projects are in or around Toronto. The four outside the Toronto area are in Kenora, Hamilton, Windsor and Cornwall.

OBSW offers literacy, numeracy and ESL/FSL instruction. Special support allowances are also available in this program to defray the costs of child-care, transportation and accommodation.

The OBSW program is normally delivered in the workplace in group settings. The program is fairly new and materials tend to be developed for each workplace setting. Some union organizations have taken the initiative in developing OBSW programs.

A considerable amount of the training provided by employers is English as a Second Language (ESL) type training. This material will usually be supplemented using examples from the employer's workplace. Normally, the programs will be scheduled to allow for a combination of employer and employee time. The typical program runs from 25 to 50 hours.

4.0 NATURE OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY MINISTRY FUNDED PROGRAMS

4.1 OVERVIEW

The nature of the literacy services provided by each of the programs differs considerably between each of OBS, OCL and OBSW, according to the objectives of the respective programs and the objectives and philosophy of individual service providers. Approaches also differ in terms of the environment from which the service is being offered (i.e., the college, the community and the workplace), course content (basic reading and writing, spelling, numeracy, computer literacy, technical skills, life skills, and ESL), instructional methodology (one-on-one tutoring vs.classroom instruction), materials, and finally in terms of outreach, promotion and marketing.

In the sections that follow, we have analysed each of the literacy programs according to five main subject areas:

- Program Objectives
- Program Delivery
- Marketing and Promotion
- Program Monitoring and Evaluation
- Integration of Programs

4.2 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The programs each have different objectives both from the perspective of the Ministry and that of individual groups. It is important to note that the OCL program differs from the other two programs in that its objectives are much less employment and job training related than those of either OBS or OBSW. The OBSW program's objectives differ from the OBS program in one aspect only; it allows ESL/FSL instruction which OBS does not.

4.2.1 Ontario Basic Skills Objectives

OBS objectives stress access to further skills training

- The Ministry's objectives in the OBS program focus on removing barriers for adults to skills or occupationally oriented training, which have resulted from a lack of literacy and numeracy skills. There are three specific MSD objectives for OBS:
    - to increase the basic skills especially literacy and numeracy in the Ontario work force;
    - to increase the participation of those traditionally under-represented in training, e.g., women, native persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and older workers;
    - to encourage women to gain an awareness of, to select, and to secure entry into training programs and occupations generally regarded as non-traditional for women.

College objectives are generally consistent with MSD

- In our survey, colleges reported their individual program objectives which are, in general, consistent with the Ministry's OBS objectives. All twenty two colleges reported that they considered the Ministry's objective of increasing basic skills of the workforce to be very important. They were less positive about the second objective of increasing participation of those groups traditionally under-represented. 86% thought it very important, and the remaining 14% considered it somewhat important. Finally, 64% thought that encouraging women to gain awareness and access to training for non-traditional occupations was very important, while 36% thought it only somewhat important.

- The range of college objectives reported (which include the Ministry's objectives and objectives the college set for themselves) were the following: (in brackets is the percentage of colleges reporting this as an objective)
    - to increase basic skills of literacy and numeracy (55%);

- to improve learners' chances for better employment or re-entry into the workforce (36%);
- to increase participation of those groups under-represented (32%);
- to provide basic life skills or implement life skills in training (18%);
- to allow learners to increase hands--on experience (18%);
- to encourage learners to set realistic/suitable career goals (13%);
- to broaden learners awareness of training opportunities (9%);
- to encourage women to gain an awareness of non-traditional occupations (9%).

4.2.2 Ontario Community Literacy Objectives

OCL objective to provide community-based delivery

- OCL objectives are to enhance the development and delivery of community-based adult basic literacy (ABL) programs and services for Ontario residents:
    - for whom a lack of literacy skills has been a barrier to participating fully in society;
    - who have been unable to benefit from the existing institutional delivery system.

Community Group objectives are highly variable

- Community groups have a broad set of objectives which vary considerably across the program but basically reflect a desire to help non-literate adults become fully functioning members of the community. Community groups are concerned with the development of personal autonomy and participation by their learners in society which only some proficiency in language and numeracy can provide.
- The variability reflects the fact that the objectives are less highly structured than colleges. Goals include both social and economic goals ranging from helping learners to read for survival reasons, to helping learners to broaden their horizons and enjoy reading for pleasure. Community groups also stress in their objectives

the desire to make the public more aware of the problem and to participate in its solution either through funding, tutoring or just sensitivity.

- Community groups are usually accountable to volunteer boards of directors, and a historically based organizational mandate which may often have different objectives than those of the Ministry. Thus, while community groups who provide literacy services through OCL tend to have objectives which overlap the Ministry's but are not necessarily the same or in the same order of priority. To illustrate, the community groups often pursue objectives relevant to the social aspects of literacy ahead of economic or employment related objectives.

- A typical community group's objectives might include:

  - to teach adults to read and write to a level of functional literacy;

  - to encourage a co-ordinated approach amongst local literacy groups;

  - to increase public awareness about the problem of illiteracy and its implications/consequences for society;

  - to solicit funding in order to maintain service;

  - to develop the skills of all its members: staff, volunteers and students, to enable then to understand each other and the community that they live in.

- As in the OBS program, our OCL survey asks groups to identify their specific project's objectives. The following are the objectives reported, and the incidence rates of each;

  - to help learners acquire and use more basic skills as reading writing, numeracy (29%);

  - to recruit and train tutors and staff (24%);

  - to heighten public awareness (21%);

  - to provide personalized basic literacy and numeracy programs for adults (20%);

  - to recruit as many students as possible (13%);

  - to enable learners to gain control over their life and their environment (12%);
  - to collect and develop adult learning materials (11%).

4.2.3 Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace Objectives

Ministry Objectives for OBSW based on OBS

- The MSD objectives for the OBSW program are identical to OBS with one exception, the provision of ESL/FSL instruction:
  - to increase the basic skills especially literacy and numeracy in the Ontario work force;
  - to increase the communication skills of those workers with English and French fluency skills less than adequate for safe and efficient functioning in the workplace;
  - to increase the participation of those traditionally under-represented in training, e.g., women, native persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and older workers;
  - to encourage women to gain an awareness of, to select, and to secure entry into training programs and occupations generally regarded as non-traditional for women.

Sponsors see only some MSD objectives as important

- OBSW survey respondents indicated that, for the most part, they considered the first two objectives of the Ministry as listed above to be very important to their programs. Sponsors rated the third and fourth objective, however, to be of much less importance; 46% thought increasing the participation of under-represented groups was either not important or only somewhat important, while 72% considered increasing the awareness and access of women to non-traditional occupations to be not important or only somewhat important.
- Unions and employers tend to have a different yet overlapping set of objectives compared to the Ministry. Employers tend not to care about increasing the access of women to non-traditional occupations, but are most interested in improving the

job-related skills of their workers. Unions pursue similar objectives to the Ministry but are also most interested in tying the literacy training to improved union participation and educating workers about their rights, grievances and union/management relations.

Employer objectives stress communication skills

- Our interviews with employers uncovered the following objectives for individual projects which are consistent with the Ministry's for the most part, however, no employers reported interest in encouraging women to gain access to non-traditional occupations. Objectives reported included the following:
  - to improve communication in the workplace in order to increase productivity;
  - to improve job-related English abilities of immigrant workers;
  - to improve communication between workers and supervisors;
  - to increase recognition and understanding of health and safety needs (e.g., industrial chemicals);
  - to reward some employees with free training (e.g., a "perk");
  - to prepare employees for advancement.

Union objectives similar to community groups

- Union sponsors of OBSW have a different yet overlapping set of objectives to that of employers. Unions too are interested in improving the communication skills of workers in the workplace, but also appear to adopt an attitude similar to that of community groups in terms of the benefits which such training may have for participants outside the workplace. In addition, unions pursue the objective of increasing participation within the community, yet in this case, the community is the union. Union objectives for OBSW include:

- to improve the ESL and literacy skills of workforce - to provide workers with the opportunity to develop their English language skills relevant to the workplace;
- to develop the self-confidence which will allow workers to participate more fully at work and in their unions;
- to improve communication in the workplace;
- to increase recognition and understanding of health and safety needs;
- to increase understanding of union issues, and workers rights;
- to remove barriers to and encourage active participation within the union;
- to encourage workers to enrol in further education programs inside and outside the labour movement;
- to upgrade the generic skills of workers who might be at risk of losing their employment due to lay-offs of plant closures, or technological change.

4.3 PROGRAM DELIVERY

4.3.1 Ontario Basic Skills Program Delivery

OBS offers structured but wide ranging course content

- The OBS program is the most structured of each of the programs investigated. OBS program components include 25 hours of training readiness counselling, academic upgrading in employment related literacy and numeracy training, and 10 hours of job search assistance. The program duration per learner is expected to be 400 hours, however, no maximum has been established.
- Some colleges, however, are not certain of the rules concerning the 400 hour provision. In practice, if a learner shows commitment and progress, colleges will support their continued participation beyond the 400 limit, but colleges report that the average number of hours each OBS learner receives prior to exit averages 253 hours across the province. The Ministry's own data estimate this figure to be 242

hours. At the same time, it is the colleges' view that 400 hours is wholly inadequate to raise an individual's literacy level significantly, and certainly not from Basic I to Advanced.

- Training readiness is an initial counselling session where a training plan is determined based on the learner's past training, and what job-related skills the learner would like to gain over the course of the training, and the counsellor's assessment of the learners' skills. This may involve tests of aptitudes and interests, a diagnostic assessment of job interests and vocational goals as well as an assessment of potential limitations to achieving those goals. This is also the stage at which women learners are offered an orientation to non-traditional occupations.

- The colleges' OBS academic upgrading component covers training in a wide range of topic areas including:

    - literacy - reading and writing up to Grade 12
    - numeracy - math skills up to Grade 12
    - science and technology skills (Intermediate and Advanced levels only)
    - basic computer skills
    - technical skills/hands on experience
    - life skills

- We also believe that there is some ESL instruction taking place within the context of the OBS program. As the program statistics indicate, 11% of OBS participants are considered second language learners. This was considerably higher in the central region where 25% of participants were second language learners. In the west only 3% of participants were second language learners and 4% in the east. Northern OBS programs reported that 13% of their participants were second language learners.

- Graduates of ESL training by colleges through other government programs often enter OBS at the basic level, because, as colleges pointed out in our interviews, there is no established alternative for individuals who have completed a basic ESL program, but are still not fully fluent in English. Colleges indicate that while ESL programs emphasizes verbal skills, OBS provides more training in reading and writing skills. Some colleges may not be following the OBS guidelines very closely with regard to ESL -related instruction in their OBS program. Our visits to classrooms have indicated that many of the students, particularly at the basic level, are new immigrants.

- The job search aspect of the course is intended for those students who are re-entering the job-market. It covers writing resumes, filling out job application forms, interview skills etc.
- The OBS program textual materials and curriculum are designed by each of the colleges and there can be variation from college to college or campus to campus within a college.

OBS learning model tends to be highly structured

- As indicated previously, OBS is the most structured model of the three MSD literacy programs. Within the academic upgrading component as described above, there are four levels of instruction with the highest providing grade 12 equivalence. These levels are Basic One (Grades 1-5), Basic Two (Grades 5-8), Intermediate (Grades 9-10), and Advanced (Grades 11-12).

The majority of OBS training is in a group-classroom setting

- In general, students may work individually from standardized exercise books and texts or may work together in group settings on specific exercises. Students from OBS can be mixed in the classroom with students funded from other programs such as the federal BTSD training. Typically, a student may be taking instruction from 10 hours to 30 hours per week.
- Group training is more prevalent than one-on-one and self-learning in the college programs.
- At the intermediate and advanced level, the model tends to replicate high school, i.e. grade 12 equivalency.
- Students from many programs can be in the same classroom, i.e. colleges include students from BTSD, Futures, etc, in the same classroom as OBS students.

- Programs differ from campus to campus, and college to college. Some colleges have extensive testing procedures (and in general, colleges do more testing than OCL groups), while others do not. The teaching methods used may vary from emphasis on teacher-led discussions to heavy emphasis on work book exercises.

Colleges have experienced some problems with OBS program guidelines

- There is still confusion over the criterion of 400 hours as the "normal" duration of the program. Colleges believe that 400 hours is not sufficient for their learners to advance from the Basic to Advanced level. Many of the basic level students appear to drop out if they obtain a job, and then may return once employment ceases. It is interesting to note that the average duration of OBS students is less than 400 hours.

- There is also some confusion over the 18 to 24 year olds who are not served by Futures. The criterion set for OBS restricts the program to persons 25 years and older but there is evidence that some colleges are allowing learners younger than 25 into the OBS program.

- Colleges are required to direct 20% of their funding to the basic level. Because of the difficulties some colleges have in reaching and serving individuals with basic level needs, some colleges, including George Brown, Seneca, and St. Lawrence have begun to contract with OCL groups who provide basic level training to learners referred from the colleges.

Colleges report a number of problems related to transition from TUP to OBS

- The colleges were asked in our OBS questionnaire to report problems experience in the transition from the Technical Upgrading Program (TUP), to OBS. The extent of problems experienced does not appear to be overwhelming. In fact, the highest incidence level of any one problem of 9 main problems reported was 5 colleges out of 22. Four colleges reported experiencing no problems at all.

- The following are the problems which were reported (number of colleges reporting problem):
    - new age limitations eliminated some students (5)
    - OBS has a higher level of paperwork (4)

- confusing for students who were in TUP (4)
- decrease in the maximum duration - 400 hours seen to be too low (3)
- poor timing (3)
- required curriculum adjustments, little preparation time (3)
- adjustment problems for college in terms of staffing, finances (3)
- OBS guidelines were vague (2)
- MSD advertising campaign was inadequate (1)

Colleges materials may not be tied much to real world examples

- Training materials vary from college to college. In most cases, materials used relate to general knowledge, rather than job-related or workplace-related activities. Materials vary widely from college to college and from campus to campus.

- Our visits to colleges suggest that some of the materials used are standard problem-solving textbooks which may not be tied to real world examples or to long-term skill needs. This is a direct result of the lack of available materials for adult literacy and numeracy learners.

All groups have difficulty getting materials for low levels

- Colleges, community groups, and unions have difficulty obtaining adult literacy materials particularly at the more basic levels of literacy. Child education based materials are not used for adults who do not respond well to a "Dick and Jane" type of story. For literacy instruction to be successful, a variety of materials must be used which are adult in interest, content and appearance, as well as personally relevant to learners, according to literacy service-providers. Materials are becoming more accessible as groups spend time and resources developing them, but this remains a problem for all providers of literacy services. Materials in a Canadian context are particularly hard to come by and thus, many materials used are American.

4.3.2 Ontario Community Literacy Program Delivery

OCL approaches to literacy training are less structured, highly variable

- OCL approach to literacy training is often less structured than that of OBS, given its learner centred approach, and less formal environment. However, many of the areas covered are similar. OCL courses will include literacy, numeracy and life skills. The guiding principle for the OCL programs is that content should be useful and interesting by the learner's standards.

- OCL programs generally do not have the resources to provide technical hands-on training or computer awareness, although there are specific examples of programs with a computer literacy component. In general, however, OCL groups concentrate on literacy, numeracy and life skills.

- Basic levels of reading which stress phonics, whole word recognition, sight drill, and memory work to the more advanced levels where reading skills such as fluency, comprehension, reading with expression, the role of punctuation, reading for the sake of interest and content, and the ability to read independently are stressed in OCL programs and at the more advanced level, involve encouraging learners to take the risk of putting their own words down on paper (composing and creative writing), spelling competence, and improve writing skills (both printing and cursive).

- Within the numeracy and life skills components of OCL programs, emphasis is placed on problem solving, and practical applications. For example, numeracy components would involve topics such as personal banking and finance, shopping, pay cheques and taxes, etc.

- OCL also places some emphasis on discussion and the development of listening and oral comprehension skills.

- As in the colleges, there is a considerable amount of ESL training occurring in the OCL program, perhaps as much as 20%. This is particularly true in Toronto OCL groups and in the north.

OCL learning model stresses flexible learner-centred approach

- There can be considerable variation in the type of programs run under OCL. Some are targeted to specific populations such as native peoples, francophones, developmentally handicapped, but the key features are that the instructional methodology is flexible and learner centred. Thus, the fundamental mode of instruction is intended to reflect the needs (as diagnosed by the learners themselves), intentions, interests, concerns and experiences of the individual adult learner. Examples, and concepts are given that are within the student's realm of experience. Curriculum is based on objectives that the individual learner perceives as worthwhile and practical. As one group indicated, "there is no single prescriptive program!!".

- The rationale for this instructional approach is that learners will actively participate in the development of programs which reflect and recognize the validity and importance of their needs and interests. It is a form of mutual reinforcement.

- Thus, the OCL approach is to choose writing and reading topics on the basis of learner expressed desire to gain access to specific kinds of skills and knowledge. "The goal is the increased empowerment of participants in areas of their choosing".

- This approach allows topics covered to be directly related to skills learned to those required at work or in every day life. For example, a learner whose objective is to obtain his driver's license must first obtain a learners permit (or "365"), which requires the passing of a test. In order to take this test, the applicant must be able to read. Under the OCL approach, the learner would be given the driver's handbook as the tool by which he is taught to read, in order to respond directly to his immediate interests and objectives.

- Other examples of flexible programming include:
  - using country and western songs to learn sight words;
  - writing the life stories of learners (New Star Reading Series) to improve their writing skills;
  - using recipes (Writer's Ink Cookbook) as the mode for improving writing and reading skills of learners.

- Most programs follow the Ministry's guidelines of delivering the programs in an informal setting, at locations and time convenient to the learners, and at no cost to the learner. Most groups try to offer an open accessible space with a non-intimidating, non-intrusive learning atmosphere for learners, and easy access to other community services.

OCL groups use one-on-one learning approach

- In contrast to the OBS program, there is a high level of one on one training — the Laubach motto of "each one teach one".

- Many non-literate adults prefer the one-on-one approach because it provides anonymity from the stigma of illiteracy, and it may also be preferable to learners who have had negative experiences in institutional group-oriented education settings. For such learners, it is seen to be very important to offer an instructional environment which differs from the school situation in which the learners previously failed to become literate. In the small isolated rural communities of Ontario, protection of anonymity can be relatively more important to education-disadvantaged adults than in urban centres. In some instances, one-on -one is used as a preparation for group learning.

- The community group may also run small group learning classes in place of or to supplement the individual tutor-learner relationships. (A few groups work almost exclusively in group learning formats.) Some groups have informal drop-in sessions on a weekly basis, which usually follows a group format. The majority of the programs are continuous intake.

- The approach also stresses the need to treat learners as adults rather than children, even though skills may be at the elementary school level.

Most community groups use volunteer tutors

- The community group typically works with a number of volunteer tutors who may spend between 2-4 hours per week with individual learners. The tutor and learner will schedule their meetings at mutually convenient times and locations. The role of program co-ordinators is to supervise and manage these relationships.

- The rationale for using volunteer tutors is based on the philosophy that a "community-based literacy project is one in which members of the community share the responsibility for providing basic education to local adults". The use of volunteers allows one-on-one tutoring without prohibitive costs. It also allows the matching of compatible tutors and learners which encourages more successful learning through trust and commitment.

- Training of tutors is typically done in-house. The extent of training given to tutors varies widely across the province, ranging from two hours to two weeks. Tutors are chosen from all walks of life, all ages and all backgrounds. Some tutors are ex-learners of OCL programs themselves.

- The tutor-learner relationship is the key to the success of the OCL approach. This relationship can suffer, however, if tutors drop out because they underestimate the time commitment required, or their personal or work circumstances change. Learners, in some cases, may develop a dependency on their tutor and should the tutor drop out for the reasons stated above, then the learner may drop out as well.

Use of volunteers versus paid staff

- The issue of paid co-ordinators vs. volunteers is much discussed within OCL groups. A negative side of depending on volunteers is that they have only so much time per week, and also may at times be required to be absent for a period of time for work or family-related reason which interrupts training for learners. There also may be high turnover amongst tutors, which causes disruptions for students and organizations delivering training as well as wasting resources spent on tutor training. Some groups question the effectiveness of volunteers who are not trained in literacy instruction skills, as is the case with most volunteer tutors. For start-up groups reliance on volunteers makes the start-up process slower than necessary as they must proceed based on trial and error. Francophone and native groups have expressed an intention to not rely on volunteer labour for many of these reasons. Native groups point out that on reserves, qualified volunteers have often been selected for many other band duties, and thus are unable to be tutors due to time constraints.

- The other side of the story is that some believe that the use of paid co-ordinators takes away from the philosophy of a community group. The existence of professionals may also put off learners who have had past negative experiences with professional educators. The obvious advantage of using volunteer tutors is that it allows the provision of highly individualized training at a relatively low cost per student.

OCL literacy instruction is usually accompanied by social support services

OCL literacy instruction is usually accompanied by social support services

- Because the community groups tend to work with individuals who may be disadvantaged and who have very basic literacy skills, there may be a need for the group or the tutor to spend time providing various informal social support to the learner, and this support is seen as necessary to ensure the long term success of the program.

Community Groups also have difficulty affording materials

- Community groups not only have the same problems as colleges in finding available adult material, but also have difficulty paying for them as they tend to be very expensive Regional networks and umbrella organizations play an important role here in the OCL program in researching the availability of materials on behalf of community groups as well as developing their own materials. For example, the Metropolitan Toronto Movement for Literacy produced a catalogue called, "Where to Buy Adult Learning Materials" to help literacy groups access appropriate materials.

OCL materials are adult-oriented

- Our visits to community groups demonstrated that the result of the inadequacy of available materials is that OCL groups tend to develop their own home-grown material, and the groups try to design such materials to inspire adult interest. It is easier to address the issue of adult content as the grade level goes up, but this is a considerable problem at at the lower levels. However, because the materials are home grown, their applicability to real life examples is quite high, e.g. newspapers and magazines are used as reading sources.
- Another problem faced with materials is that for most effective learning, the materials should reflect the different skill and grade levels of individuals. Such variety is presently not available.

There is a wide range of materials used in OCL programs

- Some materials used in OCL programs are highly structured as is the case in Laubach. Others are highly eclectic, as most groups tend to be considerably more flexible in their choice of learning materials depending particularly on the individual's needs.

The problems with materials appear more severe for special groups

- Native and Francophone groups complain of a lack of culturally appropriate materials.

- Native groups prefer to use native-oriented materials compatible to native learning styles which are not readily available. There is a manual produced by the B.C. government called the "Native Literacy and Lifestyles Curriculum Guidelines" which is useful to some groups.

4.3.4 Native OCL Program Delivery

Native groups use culturally-oriented approaches

- Instructional methods used by native literacy groups differ from other OCL groups in that they are more appropriate and compatible with the linguistic, historic and cultural specificity of the native community as well as native learning styles. Native learners do not like the class room, nor do they like structured methods like Laubach which are considered to be inappropriate. Most native groups, however, are still in the early stages of development, and have yet to fully develop their instructional methodology.

- The Native Literacy Coalition suggested that there were two main reasons that native students have low levels of literacy which reflect the need for native-specific instructional methods, and native instructors:

  - native learning styles differ from other methods - natives tend to learn by observation rather than individual learning assignments;

  - natives have generally been taught by non-natives who did not understand the historical and cultural identity of native students, thus making the native students very uncomfortable with the education system.

- As a result, it is very important in the native approach to offer an instructional environment which differs from the school situation in which the learners previously failed to become literate, as mentioned above for other OCL learners.

Native learning styles differ from other learning styles

- Our interviews with native groups have indicated that native learning styles focus on learning by observation rather than individual learning assignments. Other characteristics include:
    - natives respond better to fewer instructions;
    - native learners will not approach instructor, so instructor must approach the learner;
    - natives are quite conservative in their attitudes towards sexual roles in the community, which must be taken into consideration in co-educational classes;
    - poetry, dance, song and drama are suggested as means of instruction and student output , because they are consistent with tribal traditions.
- Similar to other OCL groups, native groups favour a learner-centred approach, although in a group setting. Native culture is used as the centre of learning topics and activities. Group interaction is an important part of the learning dynamic. Hands-on experiential methods are also stressed in the native learning model.
- Native groups also have to deal with many socially related problems which affect the delivery of literacy, such as alcoholism, unemployment and family violence. This means that, in general, native groups spend a lot more time building commitment and dealing with sporadic attendance than do other groups.

Native approaches differ between reserve and urban setting

- Native approaches differ between a reserve setting and an urban setting. Non-literate adult natives on reserves are likely to be more sensitive to the stigma of illiteracy given the close-knit nature of a reserve community. Native learners in an urban community are more able to protect their anonymity.

- Also, in an urban setting it is found to be more difficult to include Native culture into the literacy instruction. On a reserve the sense of community is strong, and human resources are more readily available, while urban native programs must rely more on print and audio-visual aids. Also, the native populations within an urban setting are likely to be more diverse, i.e. from a variety of tribal groupings, therefore cultural topics must be more general in nature. Literacy on reserves is seen as a form of community and economic development as well as a positive contributing factor in striving for native self-government.

4.3.5 Francophone OCL Program Delivery

Francophone groups stress cultural and linguistic specificity

- There are a number of francophone literacy groups in Ontario, many of which are still in the developing stages. These groups view themselves as distinct from all other groups, and place a high priority on maintaining autonomy and independence from anglophone approaches and materials. Approaches stress recognition of the cultural, linguistic and historical specificity of the Franco-ontarien community. This can be seen by the fact that they did not join the Ontario Literacy Coalition and instead formed their own coalition.

- The groups also stress that recognition of the specific cultural characteristics of the francophone community be emphasized as the number of francophone literacy groups grows. In other words, they do not want to adapt instructional methodologies and materials used in anglophone groups as the basis for their development. Rather, they believe that specific francophone methods and materials should be created at this "primordial" stage of organizational development.

Francophone groups prefer group setting

- Francophone groups differ from other OCL groups by favouring the use of a group training model which also recognizes individual needs. Their approach involves groups of no more than five or six.

- Francophone groups feel that the differences between anglophones and francophones must be recognized in program delivery, and do not feel that bilingual programs adequately address their needs. In the past, francophone groups have viewed the translation of instructional methods and materials from English to French as culturally and linguistically inappropriate for the provision of literacy instruction.

- Some of this approach reflects a belief that francophones are already under a lot of social pressure to learn English and are often made to feel inferior about their own language. Similarly, francophone groups do not feel their programs should be used for FSL as it diminishes their effectiveness of teaching literacy skills to francophones.

Francophone groups prefer paid instructors instead of volunteers

- Another differentiating characteristic of francophone groups is that they would prefer not to rely on volunteer tutors, insofar as tutor turnover, and lack of commitment, imposes restraints on the development of their programs. Alternatively, francophone groups feel that funding from the government should be sufficient to allow the remuneration of literacy instructors.

- As is the case with native groups, most francophone groups are in the very early stages of development, and have not fully developed their instructional methodology, curricula, and materials.

- Similar to English and native OCL groups, francophone groups feel that an important aspect of their mandate is to provide a social support function for their learners. They also recognize the behavioural benefits of improved literacy skills to learners.

4.3.6 Role of OCL Umbrella Groups/Regional Networks in OCL Program Delivery

Umbrella Groups/Regional Networks provide information and referral

- There are a number of OCL funded organizations who are not involved in the direct provision of literacy services. Instead these groups serve as information and referral services, develop linkages between literacy groups and lead public awareness campaigns and lobbying efforts with government.

- The Ontario Literacy Coalition is the largest of these umbrella groups, receiving over $57,000 ($45,000 funding and $12,500 for materials) from OCL last year. The Ontario Literacy Coalition currently has a mailing list of 1,200, up from 700 last year. The only area where it lacks support is in the francophone community. The OLC helped to form many literacy groups, and is the major lobby group representing literacy groups in Ontario to both the public and the government.

- Others regional networks include, among others, the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition, Metropolitan Movement for Literacy, Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton-Wentworth, Bruce Grey Literacy Network, Project Literacy in London and offer the following types of services:

  - centralized bilingual information and referral service - a central contact for information regarding adult basic literacy programs and support services for the public learners and tutors
  - referral through "hotlines" which offer a neutral and anonymous source of information on available programs
  - co-ordinate and facilitate outreach in the community
  - public awareness campaigns which raise profile of literacy as a problem, through the use of brochures, press conferences, media, public displays (in libraries, shopping centres etc.)
  - increase awareness among social service workers and referral agencies
  - initiate new programs in their area
  - recruit new learners and find appropriate programs to meet their needs
  - gain better understanding of the extent of problem in community (research), the locations where programs are required, needs of learners
  - represent literacy interests at municipal, provincial and national levels of government
  - organize events for International Literacy Day
  - organize workshops, special guest seminars, professional development days for literacy co-ordinators
  - develop community-based instructional materials for literacy service providers (e.g. "Where to Buy Adult Literacy Materials" produced by the Metropolitan Toronto Movement for Literacy)
  - develop resource materials for program evaluation

- consult with other literacy programs and government.

- The regional "hotlines", the first of which was developed in Hamilton, assist in providing information for a prospective learners and match them with appropriate programs. This service may become more useful if the tendency is towards community based delivery of training, and the number of both federal and provincial training programs increases, because the need for somebody to disseminate literacy program information for a less-educated clientele will become proportionately greater.

4.3.7 Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace Program Delivery

OBSW program guidelines similar to OBS

- Ministry guidelines suggest that the following components may be included in the course content for an OBSW program:
  - literacy and communication skills through to Grade 12 (Basic through Advanced)
  - numeracy and mathematical skills though to Grade 12 (Basic through Advanced)
  - oral-aural fluency in English or French as a second language or dialect
  - development of skill in use of occupationally related vocabulary in ESL/FSL
  - science and technological skills for Intermediate and Advanced levels
  - technical hands on applications of literacy and numeracy
  - computer literacy

OBSW materials are related to workplace examples

- Materials used in OBSW programs typically are developed by the community college or are based on union work-related materials, e.g. the collective agreement. Most materials used in the OBSW program are related to the job, e.g. understanding company policies, company forms etc.

Union-Sponsored Programs

Union sponsored programs offer literacy and ESL/EWP

- Union-sponsored programs offer similar course content to OBS, including: basic literacy, communication skills (verbal, oral, written, aural), numeracy and mathematics, computer awareness, life skills.

OBSW learning model stresses group learning in workplace setting

- The OBSW program is normally delivered in the workplace in group settings. The program is fairly new and individual curricula tend to be developed for each workplace setting. OBSW programs follow a group learning situation because the program guideline suggests that the program should not be delivered to groups of less than six. 82% of our survey respondents indicated that they used a group setting of 8 persons or more.

- Normally, the programs are conducted in the workplace and will be scheduled to allow for a combination of employer and employee time. Many of the programs are short-term running from 25 to 50 hours in duration.

- There is a considerable amount of ESL training in both employer and union-sponsored programs, although the topics covered are usually examples from the workplace. Considerable stress is placed on verbal communication in the workplace.

Union-sponsored programs follow a college-designed group model

- There are three employee/union associations who are being funded by the OBSW program, the Metropolitan Toronto Labour Council, the Hamilton Labour Council, and the Ontario Federation of Labour. The programs tend to follow a group model with a learner-centred curriculum.

- The Metro Toronto Labour Council receives the most funding of any one OBSW group. It sponsors English in the Workplace (EWP) programs with 13 unions in 50+ companies. It also offers ABL programs involving: math upgrading, effective reading and writing, basic literacy, basic numeracy, and some computer awareness, similar to an OBS program. 50% of the union programs are equally time-shared with management.

- Each EWP program runs for 100 hours – 4 hours per week on alternative days for 25 weeks except for computer awareness which runs for 40 hours over 10 weeks EWP -three sessions(units) a year. The Metro Council is affiliated with George Brown College which assists in the development of the course, and provides accreditation for participants The EWP and ABL courses follow a group model with the typical teacher/student ratio of 1:10 and 1:6 respectively.

- The training takes place at a variety of locations, including the workplace, union halls, as well as the union education centre in Toronto. The majority of the union programs take place in a classroom, cafeteria or boardroom at the worksite.

Union OBSW programs relate literacy/EWP training to workplace

- The union model stresses workplace and union-related topics, such as health and safety, workers rights, collective agreements, filing a grievance, information about the Labour Relations Act, rights as Canadian citizens, etc.

- Instructors are typically union members who assist in developing workplace-related skills. Potential instructors are picked from the shop floor, and take training from George Brown College, as part of the project cost.

- One newsworthy example of the application of workplace to the union-sponsored programs involved "English on the picket line"(Toronto Star, June 14, 1988). In this case, 75 workers (Vietnamese, Chinese, and Spanish) on strike were given ESL instruction in the sidewalk classrooms. The instruction involved showing the strikers what the picket slogans meant.

Employer-Sponsored Programs

OBSW employer-sponsored courses are primarily ESL/EWP

- Almost all of these employer-sponsored programs offer ESL programs for employees, i.e. the instruction focussed primarily on oral communication skills rather than reading and writing skills. Of the employer programs which participated in our interview program, only one was not ESL. This one is part of a broader program offered by this company which is designed to upgrade the employee's workplace skills. One other is for people who's first language is not English, but who already have a working knowledge of the language. All the others are designed for people who have little or no knowledge of English.

- The topics covered in the employer programs are geared specifically to the workplace. For example, topics might include company policies, functions of different departments within the company, how to fill put applications, memos etc.

Initial impulse for the course came from outside companies

- Many of the companies in the Toronto area were approached by a member of a community college to discuss the possibility of running a program for the employees. The community college subsequently ran the program for the company. The colleges involved in this are primarily Seneca College and George Brown College.

- Six of the companies in this group belong to the Magna group; the initial impulse for their programs came from the head office, and they all run the programs in a similar fashion.

Community College instructors set the curriculum for employer-sponsored programs

- The employer-sponsored programs that we spoke with were all run by instructors at community colleges, a very high proportion of which are from Seneca College. The college was responsible for setting up the curriculum; in some cases, someone from the company would advise on items for the curriculum, including company safety posters, labels from containers of dangerous products, and personnel notices.

- In general, the programs use the generic curriculum offered by the college, and use little from the companies. There are two companies which are exceptions, both providing considerable material for the classes.

- The curriculum is designed for literacy in the workplace, and the use of writing, speaking and reading. All the programs in this group concentrate on English, rather than French. They are also involved in literacy rather than numeracy.

Programs take place at the company's plant

- Only one of the companies interviewed held the course away from the plant; in that case, the company had a problem with attendance, because the employees found it difficult to get to the community college.

- In all the other cases, the companies offered a meeting room in the plant for the OBSW instruction. This was considered to be an advantage, in that employees were able to attend right after work.

Classes use company time and employee time

- The typical operation had 90 - 120 minutes of instruction for anywhere from 6 to 25 students, once or twice a week. Many of the companies let the employees take half the course on company time, and the other half on their own time. Only two stated that the course was run entirely in the students' own time. Our survey results indicate that over half of the programs (55%) involve a combination of employee and employer's time.

Most of the employer programs are offered on a voluntary basis

- Companies generally announce to all their employees that this course is being offered, and ask for volunteers. The response to this approach is thought to be very positive.

- Three companies take a different approach: they identify employees who might benefit from such a course, and suggest they take it. In one of these cases, the literacy course is offered as part of a larger training program to a group of new employees who are also new immigrants.

Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL)

- This is a distinct group from the employer and union programs which sets out to establish sites for teaching ESL in the community. It contacts local companies and unions, and suggests they might like to set up a program for their members/employees. So far, they have 3 union and 2 company sites, reaching approximately 150 participants. They are very pleased with the success of these schemes, and are already working to establish more of them.

Women Training for Employment

- This is an annual training program for unemployed native women, funded under OBSW. The program accepts 14 or 15 women a year, to teach them a range of job skills including literacy and numeracy. The program lasts the whole year, and involves on the job training for a portion of the year. The organizers believe that literacy is an important part of this program.

4.4 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

4.4.1 Ontario Basic Skills Marketing and Promotion

Colleges have mixed methods of promoting and marketing their OBS program

- Most colleges find that their OBS learners find out about the program through word-of-mouth and through referrals. Colleges also use a diverse mix of other marketing and promotion tools including newspaper ads and T.V. and radio announcements.

- 19 of the 22 colleges use local newspaper ads as a way of promoting their programs. Of these 19, 59% (13) thought that this method was moderately effective and another 23% thought it highly effective.

- Very few colleges used local newsletters as a marketing tool, but those that did for the most part considered it highly effective.

- Only about half of the colleges are using T.V. ads and of those that did, most found it to be only moderately effective. More colleges were using radio advertising but also found this to be only moderately effective. This may reflect the economic situation of many learners who may not own either T.V.'s or radios.

- Some colleges are not concerned with extensive marketing as they do not like to have extensive waiting lists. 14 colleges reported having a waiting list. Others feel that if the Ministry is going to promote the OBS program to the public, then it should allocate more resources to support a larger student intake resulting from that publicity. Colleges prefer not to market the program if they know that they will have insufficient resources to handle more students.

4.4.2 Ontario Community Literacy Marketing and Promotion

Most students are made aware by word of mouth and agency referrals

- OCL groups depend on word-of-mouth and grass roots promotion such as door to door, visits to churches and schools, as they do not have the resources for sophisticated marketing. 69% of the groups responding to our questionnaire reported that word-of-mouth was the primary mechanism by which most students were made aware of the program. This is particularly true amongst francophone and native groups.

- Community groups also depend heavily on referrals from churches, legal organizations, social service agencies, welfare officers etc. 45% of groups reported that referrals were important in informing potential learners about community literacy programs.

- To a more limited extent OCL groups use newspaper ads, bookmarks in library to attract tutors, T.V. and radio ads, posters, pamphlets, and the telephone "hotlines". Of those that did use newspaper ads, 66% found it to be either moderately or highly effective. Groups found local newsletters to be relatively less effective, similar to OBS experience. T.V and radio ads were seen to be effective by those that used them as were flyers.

OCL Groups have limited resources for marketing and promotion

- Most groups have very small budgets and limited manpower for publicity campaigns which explains their reliance on word-of-mouth and referral. This was borne out in our survey results which showed the groups with OCL funding of $37,000 or more using more T.V. and radio ads as opposed to those receiving less funding who relied on word-of-mouth and referrals.

OCL groups report recent press causing increased demand

- OCL groups have been somewhat upset that the Ministry's promotion and marketing campaign has brought a lot of people to their doors that they cannot handle. OCL groups had to turn many of these learners away or start waiting lists because of inadequate resources to serve them all. This may have a negative impact in the long run, because those illiterates who are turned away will never return. OCL groups believe that government should back up publicity with increased funding.
- Many groups also do not want to be involved in a lot of their own promotion if they are not going to be able to handle the increased demand. This is supported by the fact that 43% of the groups have waiting lists (at time of writing).

4.4.3 Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace Marketing and Promotion

Unions use visits to workplace to sign up learners

- Unions often send representatives to the workplace to promote the OBSW programs with both workers and employers.
- Unions also drop pamphlets off at the workplace, in many languages, emphasizing the ESL nature of the program. Unions promote the fact that it's free;"Free English and Math Classes at Work" are the captioned headings in their brochures, and they use union stewards as a contact.

Employers do not require extensive marketing

- It is relatively easy for employers within the workplace to promote OBSW classes. Most programs are voluntary, but in a few programs, employers select and instruct the employees who are to take the course in an extreme form of "direct marketing".

4.4.4 Participants' Feedback on Marketing and Promotion

- 24% of learners interviewed found out about the program in which they participated by referral. OCL learners were more inclined to have been referred, as 37.2% of OCL respondents indicated.

- For OBS learners, the most common way of finding out about the program was through a college, school or university (24.1%). Other important methods for OBS learners were the Canada Employment Centre (18.5%) and newspaper ads.

- The least successful methods of informing the public about the literacy programs were radio and government brochures. Only 1.7% of learners found out about their program from the radio and only 1.5% were made aware through government brochures.

4.5 PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.5.1 Ontario Basic Skills Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Colleges use variety of methods for evaluation and monitoring

- The majority of colleges use a variety of methods to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of their program, including formal course evaluations, training plans and learner evaluations. 55% of colleges reported the use of formal course evaluations, and 50% used the learner plan and post training assessments for evaluation purposes. 46% of colleges also evaluate the learners employment or training status at exit.

- Monitoring of success during the training program was accomplished through the training plan which each OBS learner determines in the first part of the course.

- Only two colleges reported conducting any follow-up with learners three months after exit.

- 68% of colleges reported that they used internal college reporting mechanisms for program evaluation.

Colleges may not be seeking student evaluation

- Colleges do not seek student feedback to the same extent as community groups do. This is likely the result of the college environment and the use of a classroom group model.

- Colleges are more accustomed to the reporting mechanisms of the Ministry than are community groups or OBSW sponsors. Colleges also have a more developed infrastructure to manage an extensive information gathering process. Funding is a constant battle for them and they may be more aware of the need to demonstrate program effectiveness to the Ministry than are other non-MSD affiliated literacy service providers.

Participants report being tested in OBS

- 68% of OBS learners in our participant survey were tested at time of entry to the program compared to 34.3% of OCL participants. 90% of OBS learners were tested during the program, but only 35% reported that they were tested at exit.

4.5.2 Ontario Community Literacy Program Monitoring and Promotion

OCL groups use informal monitoring mechanisms

- OCL groups reported in our survey that informal feedback from both tutors and students were the main ways in which they measured the success of their programs. Monitoring occurs mostly through regular telephone contact with learners, tutors, and some informal, handwritten report filing.

- Most groups have some kind of intake forms based on preliminary interviews but much of this information is qualitative. Very little demographic information is requested of learners as part of the non-intimidating approach of the community groups.

- Our survey asked groups to report use of a variety of methods which they presently use for evaluation and monitoring their program. Survey results indicate that 21% of OCL groups used formal course evaluations and 31% used Ministry reports as evaluation methods. Formal course evaluations were of course more prevalent amongst the more established literacy organizations.

- Further, 26% of groups reported that they evaluated learners against a training plan, and 30% performed some type of evaluation at exit. Again these methods were used in greater regularity by the groups which have been delivering training for more than one year. However, this is in contrast to our visits which seem to show that very little exit information was tracked and post assessments were only conducted if requested by individual learners.

- The most prevalent formal method of on-going monitoring of OCL programs was the use of training plans with learners which was reported to be used by 41% of groups.
- OCL groups have a distrust of numbers and do not believe that numbers can be accurate indicators of success. 43 groups reported that they have multiple funding sources and some indicated that they do not want to be filling out forms for everyone as they would have little time for anything else.
- Very few groups conducted any follow-up with learners, e.g. status three months down the road. This is mainly due to a lack of time and manpower as well as the difficulty in tracking a highly transient population.

OCL groups resist formally testing learners

- OCL groups reported that learners themselves do not like formal tests. They are often seen as unpleasant reminders of their previous education experiences.
- In contrast to OBS, 34.3% of OCL respondents to our participant survey, reported that they were tested at time of program entry, 62.8% of OCL learners were tested in some way during the program and only 2.9% were tested at exit.

Referral Group uses call-back system

- The referral service in Hamilton uses a call -back system to track whether or not people who used their service had contacted the program suggested, were currently registered and currently participating, and to gain an understanding of the barriers which prevent callers to follow-up successfully on referrals given. The organization made close to 300 call backs between November, 1986 and April, 1988.

OCL Groups reluctant to increase level of monitoring and evaluation

- Many community groups expressed strong reaction to any monitoring or control activities beyond their current budget submissions and their own accountability to their boards of directors. Indeed, some groups argued that any kind of monitoring would not be in the interest of their clients and would interfere with their other management activities.

- Many community groups are also funded by different bodies, and therefore do not see the need to be accountable to everyone. Their main accountability is to their own Board of Directors. Groups do not have the resources to gather and monitor information, and believe that conventional measures such as costs per contact hour may make them look inefficient.

4.5.2 Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace Program Monitoring and Promotion

Employers do not have any formal mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

- None of the companies interviewed indicated that they had any mechanism for measuring the success of these classes, other than through casual observation and interaction with students. Most believed that they were indeed successful, but were unable to quantify the success, or indicate what their criteria for success were. Three companies, however, reported through our mail questionnaire that they used learner evaluations at the end of the program.

- The companies were not concerned at this inability to evaluate the program. They were happy to be able to offer their employees this benefit, and left it up to the individual to progress at his or her own speed.

- Only one company expressed some dissatisfaction with the level of achievement of the participants. This company felt that the employees on the program found it too easy to communicate in their native tongue, and had no incentive to use English.

- The people interviewed at the companies believed that the instructors had made some sort of evaluation of the individual participants at the end of the program, generally through some sort of written test. However, none of the company contacts had seen the results of these evaluations, nor did they know what the results had indicated.

Unions perform more monitoring and evaluation than employers

- Unions use tests as assessment forms on exit for particular levels. This is required at least in Toronto in order to get George Brown accreditation. Unions tend to have placement interview forms, but employers do not .

- Employers and unions are more able to handle the paperwork, and tasks related to Ministry reporting mechanisms than are community groups. Employers for example tend to have a human resources department which can track the appropriate information. However, as the funding is relatively small in proportion to other costs, they show considerable disinterest in accountability to the Ministry, i.e. the money is not as important to them as it is to either colleges, community groups or unions.

- Unions are similar to the community groups in that they lack the personnel and time to gather and track information, but are more interested in using the information for their own means than are community groups. Therefore, unions will track the information not because they feel accountable to the Ministry but want to be able to tell their members, employers and the public at large what they are doing. Community groups believe in demonstrating their worth to the public and potential funders with live examples rather than statistics.

4.6 INTEGRATION OF PROGRAMS

High variability of linkages across province

- The extent of integration between programs varies widely across the province. In some areas, the colleges are not even aware of community literacy groups in their area. In other cases, OCL programs have been set up by college instructors who have been laid off by the college due to finding cutbacks. In some communities, colleges and OCL groups work well together, and refer learners to each other based on the learner's preferred instructional approach, but in other communities, very little communication appears to occur.

- Links between colleges and OCL groups are beginning to take place, in recognition that colleges may not serve Basic students as well as community groups. This trend is most evident in Toronto where Seneca and George Brown are starting to contract out their Basic level learners to OCL groups. George Brown, for example has this arrangement with 5 OCL groups.

- There also appears to be considerable rivalry developing between the school boards and the college, and each appears to view the other as a competitor.

OCL Regional Networks play important role here

- The services offered by regional networks greatly aids the integration of MSD programs by assisting learners to find the most appropriate program for them as well as helping the various service providers to become aware of each other's existence and relative strengths and weaknesses.

Toronto colleges have strong links with OBSW programs

- George Brown and Seneca have both forged strong links with employer-sponsored OBSW programs. Seneca in particular has help to develop a number of programs within the Magna group of companies. George Brown as well as being involved with a number of employer programs plays an active role in the Metro Toronto Labour Councils programs providing consultation, tutor training, and accreditation of learners.

4.7 ADULT EDUCATION AND THE LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The following are a number of comments which were made in interviews with program co-ordinators concerning adult education and its delivery in the local Boards of Education.

- Community colleges see the Boards of Education and their delivery of adult education programs as providing competition to the community colleges and their delivery of OBS. Some in the college system felt that the education system model of adult education was very similar to its traditional institutional educational style and not sufficiently adapted to the needs of adults. This was largely a subjective comment and we have no way of verifying the authenticity of the statement. The colleges also view the education system at somewhat of an advantage since the schools can offer grade 12 instead of grade 12 'equivalency'.

- A number of community groups receive funding from their local Boards of Education in addition to their funding from the Ministry of Skills Development. Philosophically, many of the Boards' literacy programs are outgrowths of the community literacy groups' programs. There are a few large programs and a number of smaller less sophisticated programs.
- The Boards of Education request somewhat more formal reporting requirements of the community groups funded than does the Ministry of Skills Development. A monthly report is filed which shows the number of learners receiving training and the estimate of the contact hours which were involved. In general, however, the groups which are receiving funding from the Ministry of Education receive very little direction from the local Boards of Education.
- The Boards of Education are also engaged in delivery of ESL/FSL type training as well as citizenship and language training in addition to literacy and numeracy training. In fact, most of the growth has been in ESL type training rather than literacy training although it is difficult to differentiate these types of training in some cases.

5.0 TYPE, NATURE AND DISTRIBUTION OF CLIENTS SERVED

In the following sections we discuss the characteristics of the learners being served by the three MSD programs above. This information has been generated from the three program surveys, the participant survey and data collected by the MSD, particularly in the OBS program.

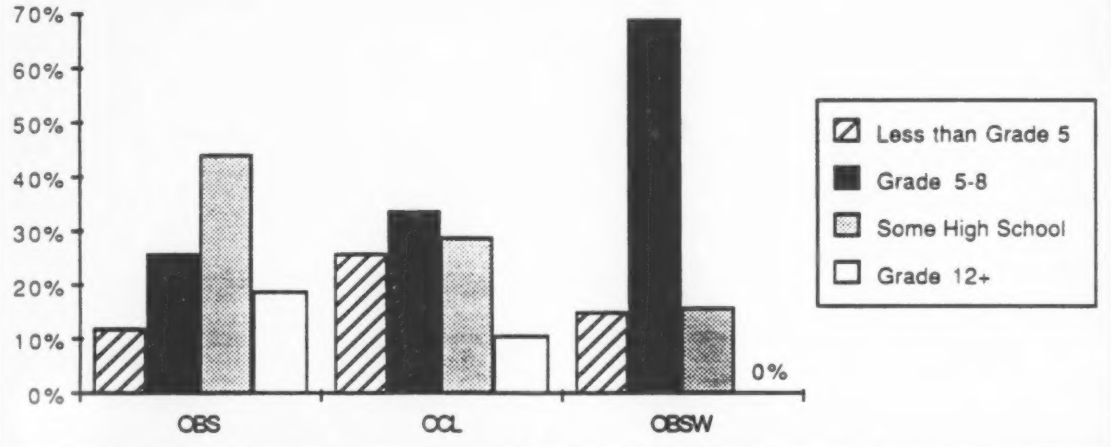
5.1 TYPE OF CLIENTS SERVED

The following sections describe the demographic profile of the participants in the three MSD programs; OBS, OCL, and OBSW, as reported by programs through our mail survey, and the participant survey. Our findings regarding the types of participants involved in the three programs have been grouped under the following headings:

- Levels of Education
- Age
- Sex
- Employment Status
- Mother Tongue
- Ethnic Background
- Special Needs Groups

Note: Percentages in the tables in this section may not add to 100% due to rounding. Percentages from the participant survey may not total 100% due to the "not stated" responses.

CHART 1
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, BY PROGRAM, BY EDUCATION LEVEL



Source: Woods Gordon

5.1.1 Education Levels of Learners

The education levels of the groups served by the Ministry's literacy programs are as follows, according to the information reported in our program surveys:

Education Levels Of Participants*	**OBS**	**OCL**	**OBSW**	**Participant Survey^**
Below Grade 5 (Level I)	12%	26%	15%	10%
5th-8th Grade (Level II)	26%	34%	69%	20%
9th-11th Grade (Intermed.)	44%	29%	16%	59%
12th Grade or More (Adv.)	19%	11%	0%	10%

*Reported by program co-ordinators
^Self-reported by participants
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

MSD literacy programs serve persons of varying educational backgrounds

- There is an extensive variety of education levels across the three programs and across participants. Some have dropped out of school, others never went to school at all or had a bad experience while in school.

- The three literacy programs serve different, yet overlapping target groups. In general, the OCL groups tend to serve individuals with more basic levels of literacy instructional needs (i.e., below grade 5) relative to the colleges. Our interviews with program co-ordinators indicate that a number of individuals who have very basic literacy needs or who are older may not feel comfortable in an institutional environment, such as a college or school setting. However, once comfortable in the OBS programs, learners like the status of being a "college" student and this can build their self-esteem.

OBS serves a high proportion of individuals with basic literacy training

- According to data provided by the Ministry of Skills Development, in fiscal year 1986, 48% of the individuals served by OBS had basic skill levels, defined as

Levels I & II as shown above. This percentage increased to 58% in fiscal year 1987. This is a much higher estimate than the 38% estimate reported by colleges in our OBS survey. Both of these figures, however are considerably higher than the 20% requirement outlined in the Ministry's program guidelines for OBS.

- 64% of all colleges have noticed an increase in the number of basic level students which is consistent with the significantly higher proportion of basic level students noted above. All of the regions noted this trend to roughly the same degree.
- Colleges report in our survey that 44% of those served in OBS programs are at the intermediate skill level which is moderately higher than the 36% and 32% reported to the Ministry for fiscal years 1986 and 1987.

OCL targets its instruction to individuals with basic level training or less

- Literacy groups report that 60% of students served have basic level training, i.e. below Grade 9. 26% are below the Grade 5 level. Native groups serve a slightly lower proportion of basic level students than the average with only 47% of students having basic level training. In contrast, francophone groups serve a somewhat higher proportion of basic level learners, with 52% having less than Gr.9 level of education.
- OCL groups serve a much smaller proportion of intermediate and advanced level students relative to OBS, based on informal observation rather than formal testing which is not common amongst OCL group. Only 11% of OCL students are at the advanced level, but 29% of OCL of students are at the Gr. 10-11 level.

OBSW mainly serves basic level learners

- 84% of OBSW learners are at the basic level, i.e. less than Grade 9. Only 16% of learners were reported to be at the intermediate level, and 0% at the advanced level. This may reflect the orientation of OBSW to serving immigrant or second language workers, which coupled with the fact that many have less than a Gr. 9 education suggests that a large number of OBSW second language learners may not be literate in their native tongue.

5.1.2 Age Characteristics of Learners

The table below describes program participants according to age:

Age Levels*	1987 Ontario Labour Force**	OBS	OCL	OBSW	Participant Survey^
Under 25 years old	22%	12%	26%	9%	13%
25-44 years old	51%	73%	52%	62%	69%
45-54 years old	16%	12%	15%	29%	12%
55+ years old	11%	3%	7%	1%	2%

*Reported by program co-ordinators
**Statistics Canada: Catalog 71-001, December 1987
^Self-reported by participants
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

MSD literacy programs serve mainly 25-44 year olds

- As the table below clearly demonstrates, the vast majority of participants in MSD literacy programs fall into the 25-44 year old age bracket. Our participant survey shows that 69% of learners fall into this category. In contrast, there are relatively few participants who are 55 years and older in any of the three programs with OCL having the highest level of representation in this age category at 7%, despite the fact that workers 55 years of age and older constitute approximately 11% of the Ontario labour force (1987).

OBS largely serves individuals in the 25 to 44 year old age category

- Eligibility criteria suggest that OBS participants should normally be 25 years old or more (18-24 year olds can access Futures), therefore it is not surprising that roughly 73% of learners are in the 25 to 44 age cohort. Colleges report that 12% of OBS learners are under 25 years old, despite the above-mentioned guideline. Interviews with colleges indicate that many individuals 18 to 24 years old prefer the

OBS program because it has a larger academic upgrading component relative to Futures.

- Participants in the western region are slightly older than those in other regions. 33% of OBS learners in western Ontario are over 45 compared to the 15% average recorded across the province in this age category.

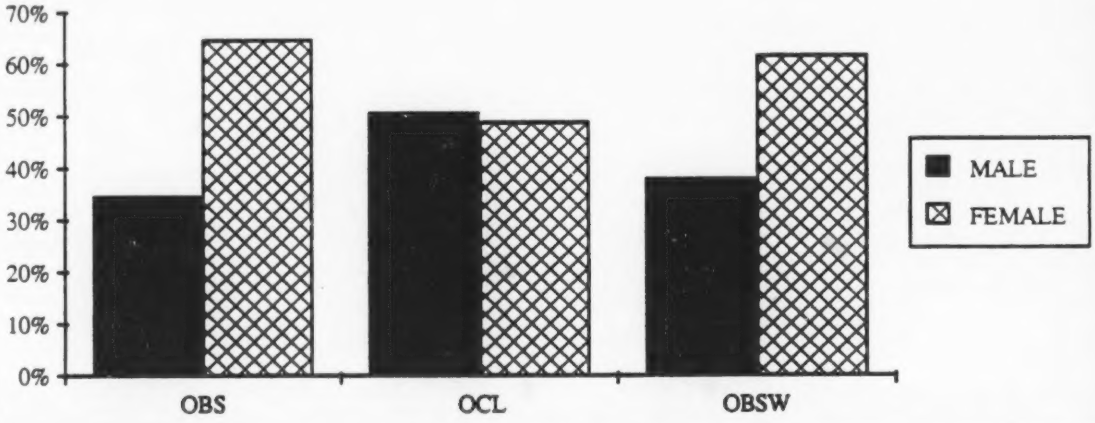
OCL serves individuals of all ages

- According to our interviews with program co-ordinators, OCL participants range in age from 9 to 92 years in age.
- Over half of those served by community literacy groups fall in the 25 to 44 age category. This is roughly consistent across anglophone, francophone and native groups. Native literacy groups, however, serve a slightly higher percentage than average (35% compared to 26%) of the under 25 age group.
- Literacy groups that offer instruction to francophones serve a slightly higher proportion of those over 45 years of age compared to the average (32% compared to 22%). Only 21% of francophone participants are under 25, somewhat lower than the OCL overall average of 26%.

OBSW reflects same characteristics as OBS

- Similar to OBS, participants of age 25-45, are the largest age group in the OBSW program, representing 62% of the total. Only 1% of learners are 55 years and older. OBSW also has a much larger proportion of participants in the 45-54 category (29%) than either OBS (12%) or OCL (15%).

CHART 2
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, BY PROGRAM, % COMPOSITION BY SEX



Source: Woods Gordon

5.1.3 Sex of Learners

The table below summarizes the composition of MSD literacy program participants according to sex:

Sex of Learners*	OBS	OCL	OBSW	Participant Survey^
Male	35%	51%	38%	33%
Female	65%	49%	62%	65%

*Reported by program co-ordinators
^Self-reported by participants
Source:Woods Gordon questionnaire results

MSD programs serve more women than men

- The extent to which the three programs serve both men and women varies considerably by program as the above table indicates. Overall it appears that there are more women being served than men, given that OBS serves more learners than the other two programs and is significantly female-oriented. Given that men are reported to have a higher illiteracy rate than women (25% for men and 22% for women, according to the Southam Study) and the overall breakdown of the Ontario population is about even, this would seem to indicate that men are being underserved by the MSD programs taken together.

OBS programs serve more women than men

- 65% of OBS participants are women. This proportion is consistent across all regions. Interviews with colleges indicate that many women take the training as a result of job lay-offs or as the result of a life change (e.g., separation) which necessitates upgrading in order to return to the job market. OBS also offers special allowances for daycare, thus raising accessibility to women. Also, given the higher incidence of female unemployment and part-time work, women are more likely to have the time flexibility to undertake this type of training.

Men and women are represented equally by the community literacy groups

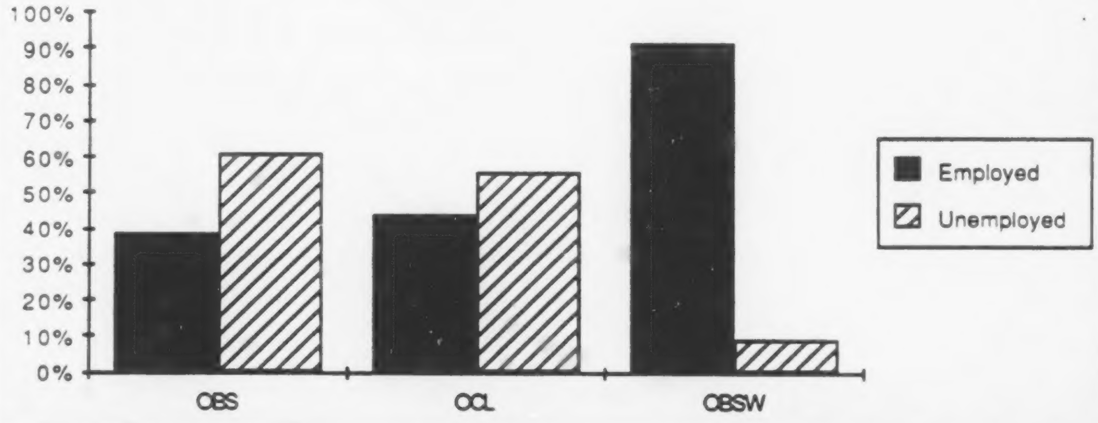
- Overall, community literacy groups serve a roughly equal proportion of men to women (51% men to 49% women). Francophone OCL groups tend to serve more male learners (62%) than female, in contrast to other OCL groups.

- Native groups appear to serve a greater proportion of women (66%) relative to men. According to our interviews, it appears that native men tend to be more sensitive with respect to illiteracy than are women, and therefore may not come forward as readily for assistance. This is particularly true on native reserves where anonymity is more difficult to maintain relative to programs in urban centres.

OBSW learners are mostly women

- On average, OBSW programs tend to serve a large number of women - 62% of OBSW participants are female according to our survey, and only 38% male. The union-sponsored program in Toronto reported that 66% of its learners were female while the Hamilton Labour Council showed the opposite, 100% of learners were male. The high proportion of women in the Metropolitan Toronto Labour Council's program likely reflects the level of participation achieved in the garment industry which has significant number of female workers. In comparison, the employer sponsored programs tend to have a relatively higher proportion of male participants than female.

CHART 3
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, BY PROGRAM, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Source: Woods Gordon

5.1.4 Employment Status of Learners

The table below describes MSD literacy participants by employment status:

Employment Status*	OBS	OCL	OBSW	Participant Survey^
Employed	39%	44%	91%	48%
Short-term unemployed	11%	9%	9%	5%
Long-term unemployed(SAR's)	25%	24%	1%	22%
Other Unemployed	25%	22%	0%	26%

*Reported by program co-ordinators
^Self-reported by participants
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

MSD programs overall serve more unemployed than employed

- It appears that the unemployed outnumber the employed as a proportion of the total number of participants in MSD literacy programs.

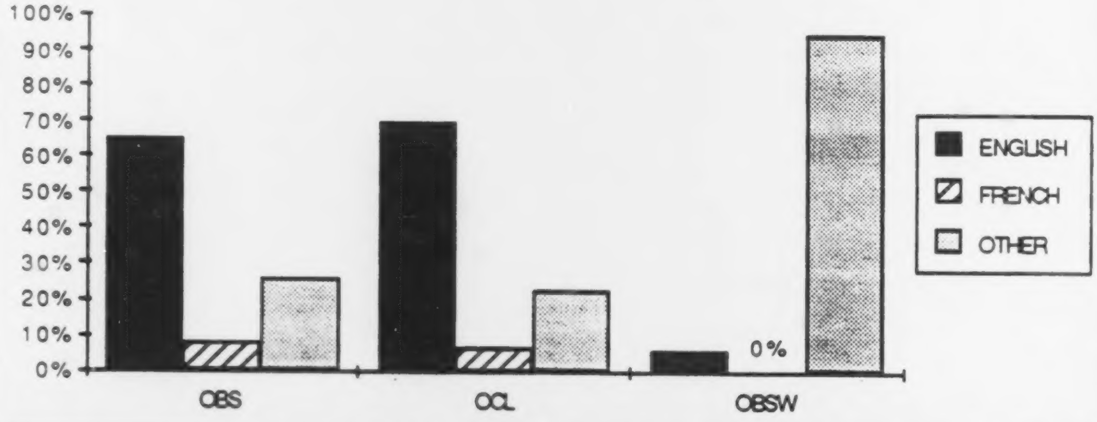
- A number of interesting observations can be drawn from our participant survey. First, native participants have a higher proportion (71%) of unemployed relative to the overall average (51%). Second, females who are participated in our survey had a higher unemployment rate (57%) than men (39%). Finally, the disabled survey participants had a 62% unemployment rate, significantly higher than the overall average.

Colleges serve the unemployed

- OBS programs tend to serve the unemployed to a greater extent than the employed. 61% of OBS learners were reported by program co-ordinators to be unemployed, and only 39% were employed either part-time or full-time. 25% of OBS learners were considered to be long-term unemployed, i.e. social assistance recipients.

- Only some colleges offer part-time OBS programs in the evening. In those areas where a part-time OBS program is not available, it is more difficult for employed

CHART 4
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, BY PROGRAM, BY LANGUAGE FIRST SPOKEN



Source: Woods Gordon

learners to attend, and may explain why there are fewer employed learners than unemployed in OBS programs on average.

OCL serves a higher proportion of the employed

- 44% of those served by community literacy groups are employed. 24% are long-term unemployed (SAR's) which is similar to the 25% seen in OBS.
- Employment status differs considerably according to region. 62% of participants in Central Ontario are employed, compared to only 25% in the east, 30% in the north and 46% in the west. Community groups in the eastern part of the province report the highest level of long-term unemployed at 51%.
- In contrast to OCL groups overall, native programs reported a very low level of employment amongst their learners - only 6% were reported to be employed, and of the balance, 25% were estimated to be long-term unemployed. Francophone groups also have a lower proportion of employed learners (29%) relative to OCL groups taken together (44%).

OBSW serves mostly employed

- As would be expected due to the nature of the program, the majority of OBSW learners are employed - 91% of total OBSW participants.

5.1.5 Mother Tongue of Learners

The table below outlines the composition of MSD literacy program participants according to mother tongue:

Language First Spoken*	OBS	OCL	OBSW	Participant Survey^
English	65%	70%	6%	64%
French	8%	7%	0%	9%
Other	26%	23%	94%	25%

*Reported by program co-ordinators
^Self-reported by participants
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

MSD programs serve primarily English speaking learners

- The table above clearly demonstrates that the majority of participants in the MSD literacy programs are English speaking. French appears to be the first language spoken for approximately 5-10% of total participants.

Although English is the dominant first language spoken, there is a significant degree of variation across regions within OBS

- English is the dominant first language spoken by 65% of OBS participants, although there is a considerable degree of variation across the different regions in Ontario, ranging from a low of 59% in the central region to 98% in the east. This reflects the relatively higher number of immigrants in the central region, particularly Toronto, compared to other regions.

OCL serves all linguistic groups

- English was the first language spoken by 70% of all OCL participants. This is slightly higher in eastern Ontario, at 79%, than in other regions.
- Northern regions serve the highest proportion of francophones, 16% compared to 5% in central Ontario, 8% in eastern Ontario and 4% in western Ontario and the overall average of 7%.

OBSW serves non-English, non-French speaking learners

- 94% of OBSW participants first learned a language other than English or French, illustrating its orientation to immigrant workers, both in employer-sponsored and union-sponsored programs.
- Many of the participants in the OBSW programs are immigrants to Canada, and thus have mother tongues other than English or French. Many of the participating workers have a low level of oral fluency in English or French and a significant number appear to be non-literate in their own language, according to our interviews.

- It should be noted that there are no francophone OBSW programs at the time of the survey.

5.1.6 Ethnic Background of Learners

The table below provides the breakdown of MSD literacy program participants by ethnic background:

Ethnic Background*	OBS	OCL	OBSW	Participant Survey^
English	52%	55%	7%	47%
French	7%	7%	1%	10%
South European	2%	6%	18%	7%
North European	8%	2%	3%	10%
East European	3%	2%	2%	4%
South American	2%	1%	1%	1%
Central American	1%	2%	0%	1%
Chinese	3%	2%	4%	1%
Japanese	0%	1%	0%	0%
Other Asian	8%	3%	39%	4%
Black	9%	5%	0%	5%
Natives	3%	10%	7%	6%
Other Visible Minorities	2%	5%	17%	3%

*Reported by program-co-ordinators
^Self-reported by participants
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

MSD programs largely serve the English community but many ethnic groups are represented

- Participants with an English background dominate the MSD literacy programs, followed by those with French and European heritage. Native peoples, on average, represent around 5% of total participants.

OBS serves mainly learners with an English heritage

- Learners with an English background represent 52% of OBS participants.
- Central Ontario has a relatively higher proportion of non-English ethnic backgrounds relative to the other regions. This can be explained by the higher numbers of immigrants in the central region compared to other parts of the province.

OCL serves relatively higher proportion of natives

- Native peoples represent 10% of OCL learners which is considerably higher than in the other programs - 3% for OBS and 7% for OBSW.
- Northern regions also serve the highest proportion of Native peoples -27%, well above the 10% average for all regions.

OBSW serves large proportion of Asians

- The OBSW program differs greatly from OBS and OCL in terms of the ethnic background of participants. Only 7% of OBSW learners have an English background compared to 52% in OBS and 55% in OCL. OBSW also shows higher proportion of Asian(39%), South European (18%), Native (7%) and other visible minorities (17%) relative to the other two programs.

5.1.7 Other Special Needs Groups Amongst Learners

The prevalence of special needs groups in MSD's literacy programs is described in the table below:

Other Groups Served*	**OBS**	**OCL**	**OBSW**
Sole Support Mothers	15%	5%	0%
People with Physical Disability	5%	3%	NA
People with Mental Disability	4%	8%	NA
People with Health-related Disability	3%	2%	NA
Second Language Learners	12%	13%	92%
Underemployed	12%	8%	1%
People from remote/isolated areas	3%	2%	0%
Ex-offenders	NA	3%	NA
Other	2%	3%	NA

*Reported by program co-ordinators

MSD programs overall serve significant numbers of sole support mothers, and the underemployed

- Taken together, the three MSD programs serve a fair number of special needs groups, including sole support mothers, mentally and physically disabled, second language learners and the underemployed.

OBS serves a higher proportion of sole mothers than other programs

- 15% of OBS participants are sole-support mothers. A desire to upgrade or return to the labour force accounts for their high participation. Allowances for daycare, transportation and accommodation facilitate their participation. The underemployed follow in frequency with 12% of program participants in this group.

TABLE 1

ONTARIO NON-LITERATE POPULATION VS. MSD LITERACY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

COMPARISONS BY CHARACTERISTIC

CHARACTERISTIC	*ONTARIO**	*OBS*	*DIFFERENCE OBS-ONT*	*OCL*	*DIFFERENCE OCL-ONT*	*OBSW***	*DIFFERENCE OBSW-ONT*	*PARTICIPANT SURVEY****	*DIFFERENCE PARTIC-ONT*
EDUCATION									
Less than Gr. 5	7%	12%	5%	25%	18%	15%	8%	10%	3%
Gr.5-8	33%	26%	-7%	35%	2%	69%	36%	20%	-13%
Some High School	28%	44%	16%	29%	1%	16%	-12%	59%	31%
Gr12+	32%	19%	-13%	11%	-21%	0%	-32%	10%	-22%
ETHNIC ORIGIN									
ENGLISH	41%	52%	11%	55%	14%	7%	-34%	47%	6%
FRENCH	12%	7%	-5%	7%	-5%	1%	-11%	10%	-2%
OTHER WESTERN EUROPE	25%	14%	-11%	11%	-14%	23%	-2%	17%	-8%
NATIVE INDIAN	1%	3%	2%	10%	9%	7%	6%	6%	5%
OTHER	22%	24%	2%	17%	-5%	62%	40%	20%	-2%
LANGUAGE FIRST SPOKEN									
ENGLISH	63%	65%	2%	70%	7%	6%	-57%	64%	1%
FRENCH	8%	8%	0%	7%	-1%	0%	-8%	9%	1%
OTHER	29%	26%	-3%	23%	-6%	94%	65%	25%	-4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS									
EMPLOYED PT/FT	46%	39%	-7%	44%	-2%	91%	45%	48%	2%
UNEMPLOYED	54%	61%	7%	56%	2%	9%	-45%	51%	-3%
SHORT TERM (UI)	-	11%	-	9%	-	91%	-	5%	-
LONG TERM (SAR)	-	25%	-	24%	-	9%	-	22%	-
OTHER UNEMPLOYED	-	25%	-	22%	-	1%	-	26%	-
DISABILITY									
MENTAL/LEARNING	3%	4%	1%	8%	5%	-	-	-	-
PHYSICAL^	25%	5%	-20%	3%	-22%	-	-	-	-
HEALTH RELATED^^	9%	3%	-6%	2%	-7%	-	-	-	-
ANY OF THE ABOVE	25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	19%	-6%

* Source: Literacy in Ontario, Creative Research Group, June, 1988

** Note: Sample size is eleven OBSW programs

*** Figures may not add due to "not stated" responses

^ Includes physical disability, eye trouble, speech, hearing problem

^^For Ontario, defined as long term illness of 6 months or more

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- OBS, however, serves a lower proportion of people with disabilities, be it cognitive, physical or health-related, relative to OCL, as the above table demonstrates.

OCL serves a wide variety of groups with special needs

- OCL programs tend to serve many of the special groups targeted by the Ministry including sole support mothers (5%), individuals with disabilities (13%), and the underemployed (8%).

OBSW serves second language learners

- Second language learners make up over 92% of OBSW programs. This reflects the strong ESL orientation of current OBSW programs.

5.2 GAPS ACROSS PROGRAMS

As a basis for analysing these groups, we have used the demographic profile of the Ontario non-literate population as described in, *Literacy in Ontario -A Research Report*, by The Creative Research Group (CRG) which was completed for MSD in June, 1988, based on the results of the Southam study. In other words, we have analysed the MSD literacy participant profile to determine how representative the population served by MSD's three literacy programs are relative to the Ontario non-literate population as a whole.

To illustrate, in Ontario, according to CRG, 46% of all non-literate individuals are employed, either part-time or full-time. In the OBS program, only 39% of participants were reported to be employed, demonstrating under-representation relative to Ontario's non-literate population. According to this analysis, the OBS program is under-representing employed illiterates in Ontario. Therefore, where groups have a lower percentage representation in the MSD profile relative to the Ontario non-literate population, we have referred to this group as being *under-represented by* the MSD literacy programs. Where groups have a higher percentage representation in MSD programs relative to Ontario, we have referred to this group as being *well-represented. (Please note that this is a quantitative rather than a qualitative description.)* A summary of this analysis is found in the table opposite.

We have also included the views of program co-ordinators regarding groups who they perceive to be underserved by the Ministry's literacy and basic skills initiatives.

5.2.1 Groups Under-represented by MSD Literacy Programs

Basic Level Learners

- 9 colleges believe that individuals with very basic literacy training needs (Level I) are under-represented in OBS programs relative to the non-literate population in Ontario. Our survey results bear this out but not dramatically. Colleges reported that 38% of their OBS learners were at the basic level compared to the Southam estimate that 40% of Ontario's non-literate population is at the basic level.
- The OBS programs appear to have difficulty serving Basic level learners (less than Gr. 9 education), because of the extent of counselling and individual tutoring such learners require. Even so, colleges are handling a much larger proportion of Basic level students than the 20% quota that was initially intended. Smaller class sizes are required for effective instruction to basic level students and this places cost pressures on the college.
- Most colleges which have been well established report a fairly high level of demand for their programs. As a result of limited resources available, some colleges are having to make decisions concerning which groups they will serve in the OBS program.
- From our comparison with the Ontario's non-literate population as described in the Southam Survey, basic level students particularly those with Gr. 5 or less are in fact well-represented by the MSD literacy programs. Basic II students do appear to be under-represented in OBS programs, but are well represented in OCL.

Advanced Level Learners

- It is interesting to note that the comparison with the Southam data on the Ontario non-literate population shows that the advanced level learner (Gr. 12+) is under-represented in the MSD programs, by 13% in OBS, by 21% in OCL, and by 32% in OBSW. Our participant survey bears this out, indicating an overall gap of 22% between MSD programs and the overall Ontario non-literate population.

Older Workers

- As the Southam study did not disaggregate their data on Ontario's non-literate population according to age, we have used the characteristics of the Ontario labour force (as measured by Statistics Canada) for a benchmark. It is clear that older workers are under-represented in the MSD literacy and basic skill programs. Workers aged 55 years and older account for only 3% of OBS, 7% of OCL and 1% of OBSW learners compared to 11% of Ontario's workforce.

- Older learners tend to be workers who were employed in occupations requiring physical labour and who had no previous need for reading and writing skills. Their ability to perform physical labour declines with age, the need for literacy skills increases in order to find alternative forms of employment, and thus it is likely that many do require literacy and basic skills instruction. However, older workers may be relatively more sensitive to the stigma of illiteracy than other age groups and this may explain their low levels of participation in MSD's literacy programs.

Men

- Overall it appears that there are more women being served than men, given that OBS serves more learners than the other two programs and is significantly female-oriented. Given that men are reported to have a higher illiteracy rate than women (25% for men and 22% for women) and the overall breakdown of the Ontario population is about even, this would seem to indicate that men are under-represented by the MSD programs taken together.

Francophones

- According to the data on ethnic status, it appears that the franco-ontarien non-literate population is under-represented in MSD's literacy programs by a margin of 5% in OBS. In OCL the gap is also 5%, suggesting that on the whole (assuming no francophone OBSW projects), francophones are under-represented relative to the non-literate population taken as a whole in Ontario.

- In aggregate numbers based on language first spoken, the francophone non-literate population is being well-served by MSD's literacy programs. In the total population of Ontario's non-literates, francophones represented an 8% share; in the

OBS program they were also 8% of all learners, and in OCL, 7%. OBSW serves no francophones, but on the whole, francophones represent an equivalent proportion of MSD's non-literate population to that of the province as a whole.

- It must be noted however, that many of those learners identified as being francophones are receiving literacy instruction in English, rather than French. Therefore, it is likely that francophones are under-represented in MSD programs in terms of receiving literacy skills in French.
- Francophone OCL groups are particularly concerned with the provision of literacy services to francophone women, and believe that they are under-represented in francophone programs.

Disabled Learners

- Some projects have been established to provide services to individuals with learning disabilities and related special needs, however, most groups state they have difficulty finding appropriate materials or providing services to these individuals.
- OCL groups find it more difficult to find tutors for learners with learning disabilities, or mentally handicapped, as they require special teaching methods which volunteers are not trained to do. As well, physically handicapped are underserved, as they require special teaching aids to which many community groups do not have access. 16% of OCL groups in our survey considered the disabled to be the most difficult groups to reach and serve.
- Our survey results indicate that relative to the proportion of disabled amongst all Ontario non-literates, the physically handicapped are underserved by both OBS and OCL. Our participant survey indicates that on the whole, learners with any type of disability are underserved by the MSD's programs by a margin of six percentage points - persons with any disability constituted 25% of Ontario's non-literates, but only 19% of the participants that we interviewed.

Sole Support Mothers

- OCL groups perceive that they have trouble serving sole support mothers, as day care allowances are not provided through OCL funding, although some OCL groups receive funding for daycare services. 15% of OCL survey respondents reported that they considered sole support mothers to be the most difficult group to reach or provide services to.

Employed/Unemployed/Underemployed

- OBS clearly underserves the employed non-literate population as only 27% of OBS students are employed compared to 46% in Ontario's non-literate population, but this is not surprising given the full-time nature of the program, and the fact that some colleges do not offer part-time OBS classes in the evenings. 7 colleges reported in our survey that they felt that the short-term unemployed could be better served by the OBS program.

- Some community groups perceive that they have difficulty serving the unemployed and underemployed learners, particularly motivated ones, because they cannot provide more than about 4 hours of instruction a weeks. Our analysis, however suggests that OCL in fact, has a good balance of employed and unemployed learners.

- Our participant survey indicates that, on the whole, the MSD programs underserve the unemployed by three percentage points.

Others

- The OCL groups are also restricted in developing their outreach programs due to funding constraints, and therefore have difficulty serving those learners who live in remote, isolated locations.

5.2.2 Barriers to Recruitment of Learners

Financial support and transportation seen as barriers by colleges

- Our survey has shown that 41% of colleges believe that the financial situation, particularly the lack of a stable income is the biggest barrier to the recruitment of learners to the OBS program. The next biggest barrier mentioned is transportation for learners from remote and isolated areas. A lack of daycare facilities is also a barrier, particularly for single mothers.

OCL groups see illiteracy stigma and transportation as main problems

- 21% of community groups saw the stigma and fear of illiteracy to be a barrier to recruitment of learners. Transportation was also mentioned by 17% of groups, i.e. the location of the service, distance to be traveled, and the costs of getting there.
- As in the OBS programs the lack of reading skills was mentioned as a barrier by a number of groups as was the lack of financial assistance and day care.

5.2.3 Groups Well-Served By MSD Literacy Programs

Women

- As indicated above, MSD programs appear to serve women better than men, even though the non-literacy rate amongst men is three percentage points higher than that for women.

Natives

- Native peoples who are estimated to have an non-literacy rate of approximately 56%, however they represent less than 1% of the Ontario non-literate population, according to the Southam study.[1] In comparison, natives represent 10% of OCL programs, 3% of OBS participants and 7% of OBSW participants according to our survey.
- Seven colleges reported in our OBS survey that they thought college OBS programs could better serve the native learners. Three of these colleges were in the eastern region of the province and two in the north.

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[1] It is possible that the Southam Study underrepresents the native non-literate population somewhat because of the transient nature of this population segment.

6.0 PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

6.1 CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

In addressing the issue of program effectiveness, there are conceptually a number of different levels on which the programs may be evaluated. For clarification, we have grouped these into four basic levels.

1. Perspective of Program Co-ordinators and Participants: What are the program co-ordinators' and the participants' perspectives and attitudes to the literacy and basic education training?
2. Literacy Levels Achieved: To what degree are literacy and basic skill levels being raised by the programs?
3. Employment and Training Outcomes Achieved: To what extent are program participants going on to further employment and training? What are the various outcomes of the training?
4. Achievement of Ministry Objectives for Each Program: To what extent are the Ministry's stated objectives for each program being achieved? To what degree are the literacy organizations' objectives in the field consistent with the Ministry's objectives?

6.2 PERSPECTIVE OF THE PROGRAMS AND PARTICIPANTS

We begin, first, with addressing the perspective of the program co-ordinators and participants and their rationale for taking the training. The program co-ordinators in each type of program views success somewhat differently.

Non-Affiliated groups perceive success differently than colleges

- Colleges tend to perceive success in terms of numbers, e.g. number of students processed, number of contact hours, number of learners completing their training plans, number of learners who go onto further training, particularly if they enrol in other college training courses.

- In contrast, community groups have a somewhat less rigorous view of measuring success, and to some groups, anyone who participates in their program can be viewed as a success. This reflects the nature of the learner-centred delivery model, in which learners determine their own objectives, therefore if they fulfil these objectives, however short-term, by definition this may be viewed as a successful outcome of the program.

- For employers and unions, success is seen in improving the workplace skills of workers.

- It is apparent that the community groups which are involved in the provision of literacy services only, have more control over their provision of literacy services than do mixed-program organizations. This is because the literacy program must compete for space, staffing and other resources amongst the variety of programs offered in a mixed program organization, and will not always be given priority in the organization's decision-making process.

We now turn to the perspectives of the program participants.

6.2.1 Objectives/Rationale for Participants' Participation

In our participant survey, we asked respondents to indicate the reasons for entering their respective program. The incidence of a variety of objectives are listed in the table below.

Incidence of "Yes" Answers By Program (%)

Reason	OBS (N=357)	OCL* (N=172)
To get a job	23.0	10.5
To get a better job	20.7	9.3
To get a higher pay rate	3.1	2.4
To upgrade job skills	26.1	17.4
To satisfy employer	1.1	1.7
To qualify for other training	26.1	8.7
For self-betterment	32.5	68.6

Note: *OCL sample was selected by program co-ordinators.

Source: Woods Gordon participant survey

OBS participants see both self-improvement and job skill as important

- There was a clear indication that learners entered the OBS program with job-related goals in mind, i.e. to get a job, a better job, or to upgrade job skills. Very few indicated that their objectives included satisfying the requirements of an employer or gaining a higher level of income.
- However, self-improvement was the most often mentioned reason by OBS learners (33%) for entering the program in our participant survey, although not to the extent of participants in the OCL program (69%).

OCL learners seek self-improvement over job-related goals

- Unlike OBS and OBSW, the OCL learner does not normally enter the program just to improve his or her job prospects or job skills, although this may be an outcome of participating in the program.

- For OCL participants, self-betterment was the most frequently mentioned reason for participating in the programs, with an incidence rate of close to 69% amongst OCL survey participants.

- This is supported by our focus group sessions with current learners. The OCL learners we met with tended to have short-term goals which related to improving their self-confidence and sense of self-worth within their own set of personal life skills. For learners at a basic level of literacy, shorter-term goals are considered by many to be much more realistic than employment goals because obtaining the required skills for employment is too far off in the future. Workforce re-entry is often not a realistic goal for basic level non-literates as the gap between their skills and those required for job preparation courses is too wide.

- As can be seen in the table above, however, job-related motivation is important for some OCL learners but are less important to OCL learners than to OBS learners. Of the job related reasons, upgrading job skills and qualifying for other training tended to be the motivating factor, while achieving a higher pay rate was relatively unimportant.

- The following examples of OCL participant goals were given in the interviews:

  Short -term goals

  - increased confidence
  - learning the basics
  - improving general knowledge
  - getting drivers license
  - doing own banking
  - reading the newspaper
  - reading to their children

  Long-term goals:

  - future training
  - future employment or improved employment

OBSW Learner Goals Tend to be Job-Oriented

- Although we do not have results from OBSW learners it appears from our interviews, that learner goals in this program tend to be job-based. Many are immigrants who wish to improve their communication skills and comprehension in the workplace. Many see it as free ESL training, which they need to advance in their jobs and in their new country.

6.2.2 Participants' Views on Program Delivery

- The majority of OBS learners (70.9%) were full-time students (defined as a 5 hour day), reflecting the fact that 75.6% of OBS survey participants were unemployed. In contrast, OCL learners are primarily part-time, because the majority are employed (56%) and therefore would be unable to attend full-time.

- The nature of the instruction in OBS tends to be classroom or in groups of 8 or more. In contrast, 88.4% of OCL respondents reported that they received one on one tutoring. When asked which method they would most prefer, 82.4% of OCL learners selected one on one. The OBS learners were less consistent, 32.3% selected classroom and 28.6% preferred self-learning. In our focus group sessions, OBS learners reported that they would like to have access to more tutors.

- Only 5% of OBS students reported that they had received any computer training. This supports the view expressed by colleges who report that they do not have the resources to provide the computer literacy component of the OBS program.

- Over 57% of participants reported that the material covered what they had hoped it would in a very adequate fashion. Another 35.6% considered it adequate and only 6.7% considered the material covered inadequate to their needs.

6.2.3 Participants' Views of Effectiveness

- Participants interviewed reported satisfaction with the quality of instruction, course organization, materials, class size, course duration and facilities. The levels of dissatisfaction in each of the categories, tended to be higher in the OBS program than in OCL, but were very low nonetheless, i.e.less than 20% responded "inadequate" in any category for either program.

- Respondents were asked an open-ended question regarding the benefits they perceived to have gained from their participation in either OBS or OCL in their everyday life. The most frequently mentioned benefits were:

% of Respondents Reporting Ways Training Has Helped

Benefit	**OBS** (N=357)	**OCL*** (N=172)	**Total** (N=539)
Can read better	13.2	46.5	23.7
Gain in self-confidence	24.1	23.3	23.7
Improved communication skills	13.2	13.4	13.2
Can write better	6.7	14.0	9.3
Self-esteem/self-worth	10.1	5.2	8.3
Control over own life	7.0	9.3	7.6
Do own banking	4.8	11.0	6.9
Helped (will help) in getting job	5.9	5.2	5.6
Not helped at all	13.2	1.7	9.3

Notes: *OCL sample was selected by program co-ordinators.
Total includes 10 OBSW participant interviews.
Source: Woods Gordon participant survey

- Gains in self-confidence was the most often mentioned benefit in the participant survey and also in personal meetings with learners particularly OCL learners.

- It is interesting to note the number of OBS participants who reported no benefits from the program (13.2%) and the much lower number from OCL (1.7%) Again as in the job-related benefits, OCL participants are more positive about the benefits of the OCL program than are OBS learners about the OBS program.

6.2.4 Discussion of Program and Participant Views on Programs

There are a number of summary conclusions based on the programs' and the participants' views of the Ministry's views of the literacy programs:

- The program co-ordinators believe they are doing a good job to the best of their ability within the constraints of the resources available. Their views of success tend to differ by each program.
- The majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the programs.
- Many participants, especially from the community-based programs, do not enter the programs with job motivations as primary reasons for taking the training.
- Many program participants, especially from the community-based programs, require considerable support services to supplement the literacy training.
- Many report intangible program results such as gains in self-confidence, gains in self-esteem and self-worth as benefits achieved from the literacy training programs.

These conclusions are based on subjective self-reporting data and are generally positive in nature. This conclusion is similar to other studies of literacy training programs of this nature in other jurisdictions.[1]

6.3 LITERACY EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

The second area of evaluation is based on a review of the extent to which literacy levels are being raised. In general, there is relatively little assessment of improvements in reading levels and other basic skills achieved in each program which is in a format that the Ministry can use for program evaluation. For this reason, we have explored a number of variables in each of the programs which serve as proxies for the improvements in basic skill levels achieved.

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[1] See, for example, George M. Diekhoff, "An Appraisal of Adult Literacy: Reading Between the Lines," *Journal of Reading*, April, 1988.

Research has shown that effective literacy and basic skills programs are characterized by a few key principles:

- A significant amount of practice time actually *doing* reading and mathematics is required for gain to occur. (An average of about 100 hours per grade gain.)
- For the practice to be effective, learners should be matched to material that is neither too simple nor too difficult for them.
- For the most effective transfer to occur, learners should practice using materials and approaches similar to those they will face in the near future, (e.g., manuals, charts, memos, forms for the workplace, materials used in day to day activities and textbooks similar to future academic class texts, etc.)
- Teachers and tutors should be readily available and active in clarifying misunderstandings.

If the above principles are in place, the amount of time required to provide one grade level of gain can be reduced from 100 hours to between 50 and 75 hours. For the purposes of this evaluation, we have used *grade level gain* as a common reference point, recognizing that different literacy organizations may have other approaches to measuring individual learner progress in literacy levels. We also acknowledge that this does not recognize the number of hours spent reading and writing by individuals on their own time, which was not directly measured in this study. Grade gains are a convenient proxy for the improvements in literacy. Other gradations could also be used based on fewer than 12 levels.

In discussing each of the literacy programs, the above principles will serve as a framework for the analysis and evaluation.

6.3.1 Nature of OBS Services Provided in the Context of Literacy Evaluation Principles

Colleges spend considerable time on literacy instruction

- English and literacy training characteristically make up about half of OBS training time. Typically, English would be scheduled for about 3 hours per day in an OBS program. Our observations of the program indicate that approximately one hour to one and a half hours of this time would be spent actually reading. The individual would therefore receive approximately 100 hours of reading in the program which allows for approximately one grade level of gain in a 400 hour program.

- However, even though the colleges have suggested that the 400 hour "limit" is insufficient to achieve significant gains in literacy, our survey results indicate that the average number of hours a learner is retained in OBS is 253 hours. This varies from 260 hours in the central region to 505 hours in the west, with the north and east being around the college average. The information kept by the Ministry, based on learner confidential information, estimates an even lower average number of academic hours on exit than our survey, at 242 hours in 1986/87 and only 174 hours in 1987/88.

- This finding may reflect the fact that many basic level students drop out before completion in order to take a job, according to our interviews with colleges. Others may simply not have the ability to progress much beyond the Basic II level, and may drop out for this reason. Students at the intermediate and advanced levels could conceivably complete their training plans in less than 400 hours.

- Some colleges in Metro especially have high numbers of individuals with ESL training needs. The English training may have a high level of grammar training as a result.

- The mathematics classes observed usually allowed for individuals to work on problem sets 90% or more of the time they were in class. The mathematics time is therefore very efficiently used.

- Materials used tend not to be matched to the workplace skills requirements or future classes, but tend to be standard problem solving texts, and many have American rather than Canadian content. The colleges also reported difficulty obtaining teaching materials for those with basic level literacy needs.

- Teachers tend to give high quality feedback to learners, but the size of the classes in some colleges and discussions with students indicated a need for more access to teacher help.

- Attrition rates are believed to be lower than in other college academic upgrading courses, such as BTSD, and PEP, due to the relatively higher level of support available to the learner in OBS, relative to those other programs. Our survey indicates that in the 12 colleges who collect data on attrition rates, 38% of those entering the program leave without completing their training plan. Only 2% leave before completing 20 hours, 6% leave before 50 hours and 10% leave before completing 100 hours. It is interesting to note that average attrition rates reported in the central region, of persons leaving without completing their training program, the average of 3 colleges was 56%, that in the north and east was 37-38% (3 and 4 colleges respectively), while that in the west was only 20% (2 colleges).

- The college programs could, therefore be more effective if they related their materials better to learners' needs and to real life examples which learners may experience after exit.

6.3.2 Nature of OCL Services Provided in the Context of Literacy Evaluation Principles

Community groups have trouble delivering sustained long term training.

- Generally there is a good matching of materials to learner needs. In the programs observed there was a high amount of usage of materials which would be relevant in every day life or useful in a job. These included periodicals, forms, public transit maps, bank statements, etc.

- The use of individual tutors for each learner provides a high level of feedback for clarification of individual problems. A sustained learner tutor relationship of high quality clearly is critical for the long term success and progress of the learner. Community groups are very conscious of this and exercise considerable care in training the tutors and in matching tutors and learners and nurturing this relationship. Some groups prefer to supplement the one on one instruction with small group settings to provide the reinforcement and structure of the group.

- As there is a relatively small amount of supervision by the organization itself, a great deal depends on each learner and the tutor in terms of the overall long term possibility for sustained development. The tutor and learner work out how often they get together which is typically from 2 to 3 hours per week. Discussions with learners indicate that approximately 50% to 75% of this time is spent in actually reading, depending on the extent to which time must be spent in making the student feel comfortable and relaxed enough to benefit. Assuming a tutor and learner meet over the course of a year on a weekly basis, this would provide approximately 50 to 75 hours of reading time which would allow for one level of grade gain assuming the materials are at the right degree of complexity.

- What is less clear, however, is the degree to which the programs are able to retain their learners over the long term and the regularity of the meetings between the tutor and learner. This information is not often kept very well by the community groups since it is up to the tutor and learner to make their own arrangements. Inspection of individual files and discussions with learners indicate that it is unlikely that all learners are able to meet as regularly as once a week over a sustained period. Some programs have been successful in keeping there learners for a sustained period of time (6 months to a year or more).

- Retention is a problem for some OCL groups. Our interviews indicate that learners may leave for a variety of reasons. They may be forced to drop out for personal or family-related reasons or because the work may be more than they anticipated. They may drop out because of a fear of failure. They may move into other programs which they feel are more appropriate. They may be forced to move their place of residence. They may have to change jobs or shifts.

- Our interviews have also shown that the part-time nature of the program and the high expectations of some learners may also encourage high drop-out rates. Situations may occur when a non-literate adult, on hearing that a program may help him confront his lack of literacy skills, "comes out of the closet" and decides to join a community group. Some such learners may become highly motivated, believing that the program will perform a "miracle" for them. However, as there is

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no financial assistance, the learner typically is employed and therefore must attend the training part-time. In fact as indicated previously, most learners will have only 2-4 hours of instruction per week. Regular weekly meetings can also be a problem to sustain over a long period. Likewise, the volunteer tutor may also work and thus may only tutor 3 hours a week. This can result in very slow improvement by the learner, who can often be at a very low level to begin with. In some cases, therefore, the learner may become disheartened by the slow improvement in his reading and writing skills and lose heart and drop out, because the expected "miracle" did not occur.

- Our participant survey and on-site visits to community group have demonstrated that clear success stories are evident in the OCL program. Our on-site visits and discussions with learners uncovered a number of individuals who had gone on to community college, jobs, or had improved their reading and writing skills in quite a marked way.

6.3.3 Nature of OBSW Services Provided in the Context of Literacy Evaluation Criteria

OBSW programs are training related but do not allow sufficient time for grade gains

- Usually the materials used in an OBSW program are quite relevant to the workplace environment. A considerable amount of the OBSW program is often ESL type training. (ESL type training is acceptable within the program design which has as one of its objectives the improvement of the communication skills of those with inadequate English or French).

- The length of the training is typically between 25 to 50 hours of which a considerable amount is oral training. In comparison with the OBS and OCL programs, this does not allow for much improvement in overall levels of literacy, based on the 100 hour guideline.

- Attrition rates do vary across the programs, ranging anywhere from 0-50%, but it general, OBSW programs appear to have lower drop-out rates than OBS or OCL programs, as the programs tend to be quite convenient for workers, e.g. either before or after a shift. The union-sponsored programs appear to have lower drop-out rates than employer-sponsored programs. Programs that are strictly voluntary and completely on the employee's own time tend to have the highest attrition rates.

Employers: Primarily ESL training, but may be necessary for skills and employment.

- Employers generally feel that the ESL training is very worthwhile. Many have considered other programs such as Ontario Skills and those offered by local boards of education but prefer the OBSW program for ESL to other programs for reasons of both quality (college instructors considered better than school boards) and the fact that the funding is 100% (compared to 60% with Ontario Skills funding). The Magna companies were particularly pleased with their OBSW programs as it fills a definite need as a relatively high proportion of their workers are immigrants.

- Companies reported other benefits of the program including:
    - increased morale in the workplace
    - improved employee relations
    - less need for and use of translators
    - improved safety and productivity

Unions view OBSW positively

- The participating unions have a very positive attitude towards the programs and believe it to be very effective Such an evaluation is based primarily on observation, such as increased attendance at union meetings, improved communication skills of participants, and increased confidence and enthusiasm shown by learners.

TABLE 2

APPROVED AND ACTUAL CONTACT HOURS, BY COLLEGE
1987-88

COLLEGE	BASIC 1			BASIC 2			INTERMEDIATE			ADVANCED		
	Approved	*Actual*	*Variance*	*Approved*	*Actual*	*Variance*	*Approved*	*Actual*	*Variance*	*Approved*	*Actual*	*Variance*
Central Region:												
Centennial	0	4,357	-4,357	28,600	35,135	-6,535	31,936	22,608	9,328	0	6,280	-6,280
Georgian	50,060	20,003	30,057	50,060	54,329	-4,269	116,690	188,890	-72,200	113,470	91,315	22,155
Seneca	2,139	24,550	-22,411	39,772	45,425	-5,653	39,994	38,029	1,965	27,192	33,229	-6,037
George Brown	13,050	51,863	-38,813	103,750	223,850	-120,100	186,750	60,856	125,894	83,350	28,361	54,989
Humber	9,680	12,401	-2,721	120,653	88,404	32,249	54,777	47,117	7,660	9,666	1,311	8,355
Sheridan	13,626	44,068	-30,442	74,570	44,978	29,592	42,964	31,773	11,191	15,102	8,629	6,473
Sub-Total	*88,555*	*157,242*	*-68,687*	*417,405*	*492,121*	*-74,716*	*473,111*	*389,273*	*83,838*	*248,780*	*169,125*	*79,655*
Eastern Region:												
Algonquin	21,845	39,693	-17,848	21,845	47,769	-25,924	23,338	45,424	-22,086	23,337	22,395	942
Durham	13,825	14,386	-561	23,041	31,259	-8,218	30,619	41,041	-10,422	15,873	17,475	-1,602
Loyalist	9,000	5,707	3,293	7,450	9,375	-1,925	10,300	11,949	-1,649	8,250	4,497	3,753
St. Lawrence	8,840	10,733	-1,893	22,640	23,845	-1,205	25,184	16,115	9,069	8,030	4,977	3,053
S. S. Fleming	26,376	28,937	-2,561	54,948	55,466	-518	25,960	36,717	-10,757	40,300	12,664	27,636
Sub-Total	*79,886*	*99,456*	*-19,570*	*129,924*	*167,714*	*-37,790*	*115,401*	*151,246*	*-35,845*	*95,790*	*62,008*	*33,782*
Northern Region:												
Cambrian	43,204	40,079	3,125	93,865	96,631	-2,766	78,923	69,467	9,456	40,041	52,291	-12,250
Canadore	16,655	43,805	-27,150	30,000	18,087	11,913	22,800	9,487	13,313	12,000	2,360	9,640
Confederation	28,660	21,015	7,645	41,974	20,437	21,537	37,573	25,700	11,873	28,660	3,319	25,341
Northern	6,680	10,408	-3,728	78,000	53,242	24,758	26,000	55,714	-29,714	19,500	5,875	13,625
Sault	17,692	16,016	1,676	23,068	19,457	3,611	20,384	11,282	9,102	11,338	8,451	2,887
Sub-Total	*112,891*	*131,323*	*-18,432*	*266,907*	*-207,854*	*59,053*	*185,680*	*171,650*	*14,030*	*111,539*	*72,296*	*39,243*
Western Region:												
Conestoga	7,206	16,627	-9,421	48,914	80,645	-31,731	52,722	30,603	22,119	20,284	2,406	17,878
Fanshawe	2,500	17,936	-15,436	60,454	46,216	14,238	27,050	40,309	-13,259	19,016	28,689	-9,673
Lambton	9,000	4,067	4,933	9,000	6,636	2,364	7,500	5,645	1,855	7,500	5,935	1,565
Mowhawk	18,045	33,434	-15,389	36,090	43,245	-7,155	75,790	83,683	-7,893	50,575	25,601	24,974
Niagara	10,800	13,229	-2,429	32,550	37,340	-4,790	26,550	26,683	-133	14,850	9,627	5,223
St. Clair	31,200	28,221	2,979	27,200	22,345	4,855	85,600	82,616	2,984	56,800	69,228	-12,428
Sub-Total	*78,751*	*113,514*	*-34,763*	*214,208*	*236,427*	*-22,219*	*275,212*	*269,539*	*5,673*	*169,025*	*141,486*	*27,539*
Provincial Total	*360,083*	*501,535*	*-141,452*	*1,028,444*	*1,104,116*	*-75,672*	*1,049,404*	*981,708*	*67,696*	*625,134*	*444,915*	*180,219*
Average	*16,367*	*22,797*	*-6,430*	*46,747*	*50,187*	*-3,440*	*47,700*	*44,623*	*3,077*	*28,415*	*20,223*	*8,192*

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6.3.4 Comparison of Training Duration and Attrition Rates

The following are a number of literacy outcome measures based on the questionnaire data which reviews the duration which each learner spends in the program and attrition rate in each program.

Outcomes*	OBS	OCL	OBSW
Number of organizations	22	146	24
Number of learners served per year (Average per organization, 1987/88)	566	74	254
Average hours instruction per learner	253	69	33
% lost due to attrition	38%	30%E	25%E
% served less than 20 hours	2%	20%E	80%E
% served less than 50 hours	6%	50%E	90%
% served less than 100 hours	10%	90%E	95%
% to employment/further training	82%	NA	NA

*Reported by program co-ordinators
E-Estimate
Source: Woods Gordon questionnaire results

OBS Training Duration and Attrition

- Colleges report they lose approximately 38% of learners due to attrition. The number of hours of instruction per learner served is 253 hours.

- Colleges report that 90% of their learners serve more than 100 hours, and only 2% drop out before receiving 20 hours of instruction.

- The distribution of contact hours across colleges and regions is detailed in the table opposite, using data provided by the Ministry. Northern colleges provided the most hours to Basic I learners of the four regions in 1987/88, while the central colleges provide the most hours for Basic II learners. At both these levels, colleges provided more hours than anticipated in the budget approvals. On average colleges provided more contact hours to the Basic II level than any other level, with intermediate the next largest category.

- The central region colleges also provide the most hours to intermediate and advanced level students. Overall, the colleges provided less hours than anticipated in budget approvals at these two levels.
- 17 Colleges (77%) have reported in our survey that the lack of financial assistance is the biggest barrier to the successful retention of learners. Some programs such as BTSD are more "generous" to the learners, with respect to Unemployment insurance support. Also, many participants are from low-income households.
- Lack of daycare facilities was mentioned as a barrier to retention by 9 colleges as was personal and family problems.
- Another problem experienced by OBS learners is the different attitudes of CEIC officers towards their participation in the program. Some officers permit learners to keep receiving U.I. while others do not. This lack of consistency may encourage some learners to drop out.

OCL Training Duration and Attrition

- The average number of learners served per year for each OCL group is 74, according to our mail survey. From our interviews with participants, co-ordinators, and inspection of files, it is estimated that the attrition rates are in the order of 30% per year. Attendance tends to be more sporadic than is the case in OBS.
- The challenge facing the OCL groups is to retain their learners over long periods of time. In our review of files with mature OCL organizations, we found that few learners had been in the program for more than 100 hours.
- As has been suggested earlier, many non-literate adults suffer from multiple social problems, and this was mentioned as the main barrier to retention by 17% of our survey respondents.
- Other barriers mentioned included frustration at the slowness of the learning process combined with unrealistic goals, change in job situation, program related

problems such as a lack of staff, and transportation difficulties experienced by learners.

- Our interviews with program co-ordinators of community groups suggest that many of the non-literate population suffer from multiple social disadvantages including poverty, unemployment, chronic illness, substandard housing and inadequate social services. Racial and ethnic minorities are also over-represented in this population. Non-literates tend also to be more highly transient than the literate population.

- These disadvantages can serve as barriers to taking advantage of literacy programs or cause irregular attendance and/or early withdrawal from the program. Such barriers can include:

    - arranging and paying for children to have day care
    - adapting to life after periods of institutionalization or drug addiction
    - arranging transport for the disabled
    - taking care of more pressing needs such as housing, social assistance
    - overcoming negative memories of school
    - transportation from isolated communities
    - having to overcome learning disabilities
    - changes in work obligations, especially in shift work
    - re-incarceration

- Natives, in particular, appear to have a greater relative level of other social problems, requiring a substantial amount of support services in connection with literacy and basic skills instruction by native literacy groups. Our interviews suggest that in addition to being a highly transient population, many native illiterates suffer from problems such as alcoholism, family violence, incarceration, unemployment and poverty.

- For those learners who live in poverty, the availability of support allowances for child care, transportation and accommodation is an important factor in participating in these programs, where it is available. This lack of support allowances in the OCL program provides a constraint to particular groups such as sole support mothers and the disabled.

- Our interviews have also indicated that flexibility is an important and necessary feature of providing services to these groups as they may not be able to attend classes at a particular time, and at consistent intervals, as is the case in other types of training programs. For, example, shift workers may not be able to attend classes during the day or at night and shifts may change during the course of the program. Flexibility is also important in the context of the diversity of learners' educational and life experiences which suggests that learners cannot be classified at discrete levels, and thus flexible programming is likely necessary.

- Our interviews with the community groups indicate that learners with multiple social problems, particularly at the more basic levels, tend to lead lives of great frustration and thus, have a need for counselling and access to a range of support services as part of the literacy programming. Counselling may be required before, during and after instruction, in order to allow the learner to fully benefit and sustain long term attendance in the program. The extent of the need for such counselling clearly differs across programs and across individuals.

- Many learners have not attended school since childhood, if at all. These basic level learners differ from the more advanced students in terms of needing more counselling. While advanced students will benefit greatly from the career planning and job preparation of the the OBS programs, the more basic level learners may benefit more from the counselling support offered by OCL programs.

- Our focus group sessions with past and current participants have shown that many learners have had a negative experience in the formal education system. These learners tend to gravitate toward community or workplace literacy programs, and are reluctant to participate in college programs.

OBSW Training Duration and Attrition

- The OBSW programs tend to be short term. While OBSW programs do not monitor this very well, it is estimated that the average number of hours instruction in OBSW is around 33 hours.

- OBSW program sponsors suggested that work pressures such as changes in shift work, overtime, illness, accidents and short-term layoffs affected the retention of learners. Also mentioned were difficulties experienced by learners in arranging babysitters, and transportation at irregular hours as barriers to retention.

Participants

- 66.9% of OBS respondents reported that their participation in the program required 20+ hours per week, as opposed to OCL respondents of whom 75% tended to be involved for only 1-5 hours per week. Further, OBS students mostly attended 4-5 times a week compared to OCL of whom 51.7% attended only once a week. This supports the full-time/part-time orientations of the respective programs.
- Both sets of learners (78.7% of all respondents), however, reported that the number of weeks that they attended was 15 weeks or more. 63.3% of OBS respondents and 64.5% of OCL respondents completed the course from their own point of view. This may reflect a bias in the sample, as names/telephone numbers of those participants who completed the program would be more easily kept than those who dropped out, particularly for the OCL programs.

6.3.5 Summary

The table below summarizes our findings with regard to the nature of services offered by MSD programs within the context of these literacy principles.

Literacy Principles	OBS	OCL	OBSW
Substantial practice time?	Yes	Limited	No
Materials to learner need?	Limited	Yes	Yes
Bridging of materials?	Limited	Yes	Yes
Immediate feedback?	Some	Yes	Yes

6.4 ACHIEVEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AFTER LITERACY TRAINING

Another prospective level of evaluation concerns the degree to which learners go on to obtain employment and further training after their literacy training. As has been discussed, these are not necessarily the primary goals of learners in the programs.

6.4.1 Participant Reported Outcomes of Program Participation

- 59.4% of OBS learners and 35.5% of OCL learners proceeded to further training after completing the program. OBS learners who did proceed tended to take technical training (34.4%) or post-secondary education (38.2%) while OCL learners tended to go on to further basic skills training. This may reflect the orientation of OCL programs to Basic level learners.

- Many participants saw positive job-related benefits resulting from their participation in the programs:

Incidence of "Yes" Answers By Program (%)

Benefit^	OBS (N=357)	OCL* (N=172)
To get a job	52.9	66.9
To get a job in right field	41.5	50.0
To get a promotion	34.2	49.4
To do job better	47.1	69.2
To increase income	40.1	56.4
To access further training	75.1	75.6
No benefit	5.6	6.4

Notes: *OCL respondents were selected by program co-ordinators.
^Responses indicate benefit already seen or anticipated in future.
Source: Woods Gordon participant survey

- As the table above indicates, the benefit seen by more participants than any other benefit, was in helping to gain access to further training which is one of the Ministry's objectives.

- These results are very interesting as they indicate that OCL learners may be more interested in job-related goals than the service providers think.

- Also, only a very small number in each program perceived no job-related benefits from the programs. In general the OCL respondents appear more positive about realized or potential benefits than do the OBS respondents.

- Only 30.6% of respondents had considered taking another training program prior to entering the MSD program. For those who considered taking other training, OBS learners tended to consider high school or ESL training more than anything else. In contrast, OCL tended to have considered community college, night school/correspondence courses or a private tutor. The majority (56.6%) of those who did not consider any alternative form of training did so because they did not know of any alternatives.

6.4.2 Reported Outcomes of Program Co-ordinators

OBS

- The survey of program co-ordinators in the colleges shows that 31% of those who exit have employment or a confirmed prospect, 11% are seeking employment, 11% are seeking further training, and 9% are not seeking training. Approximately 38% of OBS program participants are unknown at exit.

OCL

- The OCL groups report that approximately 13% of those unemployed obtained employment at exit and another 13% were seeking further training.

6.4.3 Other Outcomes

OBS and OCL programs delivering ESL

- As has been indicated in previous sections, all three programs are providing some ESL training. In the OBSW program, this is the result of program guidelines which permits the ESL/FSL instruction. However, in the other two programs, ESL does not fall within the guidelines and thus could be viewed as an unintended outcome in terms of the Ministry's' objectives. In both OBS and OCL, we estimate that between 10-20% of the training provided is ESL/FSL.

- This is particularly true in Toronto and the north for two different reasons. In Toronto, there is a large immigrant population who require literacy instruction in English both have only partial oral command of the language. In the north, OCL groups in small communities are more inclined to allow ESL students into their groups because there is no alternatives in these communities for individuals with ESL needs.

Referral "hotlines" provide information to both learners and programs

- To demonstrate the outcomes produced by regional hotlines, the following are statistics provided by the hotline in Hamilton, the first of its kind in Ontario. Since January, 1985 to May, 1988, Hamilton, has fielded 3,844 calls from people requesting information on programs.

- In Hamilton, the callers have been 55% female/45% male and reasonably well represented across age categories although the largest group was 25-34 (34%). Of the 3,800 calls, 917 were from people wishing to become tutors. The majority of callers were looking for assistance with literacy (33%), followed by high school equivalency, ESL and mathematics.

- Hamilton reports in 1988, of 263 people called back in a random check between Nov, 1986 and April, 1988, 73% of persons reached had contacted the program which was suggested to them. 57% had registered in a program and 51% were currently participating in a literacy program.

- In comparison, the Ontario Literacy Coalition reports incidence; 5-7 requests per week for information from public, 3-5 referrals for learners and tutors per week. They also have produced 5 newsletters to date, and membership has grown from 700 to 1200 in the last year.

6.5 ACHIEVEMENT OF MINISTRY'S STATED PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

6.5.1 Ontario Basic Skills

College programs increase literacy and basic skills

- The colleges appear to be, for the most part, achieving the objectives of the OBS program as determined by the Ministry. The OBS programs are, in general increasing the basic skills of the workforce, and they are increasing the participation of under-represented groups. The extent to which they are encouraging women to enter or gain access to training in non-traditional occupation is, however, less clear. The programs do serve a significant proportion of women, but whether or not that is leading them to non-traditional occupations is difficult to measure.

- College objectives also appear consistent to MSD's objectives, and direct the focus of their programs on employment and job-related skills.

6.5.2 Ontario Community Literacy

OCL groups do not relate literacy training to employment

- Community groups are meeting the objectives of the Ministry, i.e. to provide community based literacy programs. The program offers literacy programs to individuals whose lack of literacy skills presents a barrier to social participation and does in fact deal with many learners who are unable to benefit from institutional delivery. Community groups' objectives also appear reasonably consistent with the Ministry's.

- The community groups however, do not place as high an importance to the job-related aspects of literacy as do OBS and OBSW programs. Community groups are interested in both the social and economic aspects of literacy skills and believe that they are not mutually exclusive. In dealing with basic level illiterates who have other social problems, the acquisition of immediate employment-related skills is seen to be an unrealistic goal, and thus socially-related literacy skills are often given priority. Our participant survey indicated that a significant proportion of OCL learners (36%) move on to other training programs, usually for more basic level training rather than technical or secondary school level training.

6.5.3 Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace

OBSW programs meet MSD objectives

- The 24 currently operating OBSW programs do, in general meet the MSD program objectives, although there is little effort in regard to encouraging women to gain access to non-traditional occupations. The individual OBSW programs' objectives are consistent with the Ministry's although the emphasis on ESL may be more extreme than the Ministry would like, given that it is intended to be a literacy program.
- The skill training is well related to job-related skills and has a strong workplace orientation.

6.5.4 Summary

The table below summarizes the extent to which the three MSD literacy programs meet the evaluation principles described above.

Evaluation Principles	**OBS**	**OCL**	**OBSW**
MSD objectives achieved?	Yes	Yes	Some
MSD + program objectives consistent?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Training job oriented?	Yes	Some	Yes

In general, it appears that the programs are achieving the Ministry's objectives, although less so in the OBSW program than in OBS or OCL, and the reported objectives of individual projects in each of the three programs also appear, for the most part, to be consistent with Ministry objectives and the programs. Literacy services offered in all three programs appear to be related to training skills, although this is somewhat less important in the OCL program relative to OBS and OCL.

7.0 COST-EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES AND ADEQUACY OF FUNDING

7.1 COST-EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES

The following section outlines two measures of cost-effectiveness for each program, i.e., contact hour cost and the annual allocation per learner. The reader is cautioned in drawing comparisons between the various programs since the nature of the program is considerably different in each case.

OBS

- The cost per contact hour for OBS according to our survey is $6.66 which is equivalent to the data provided by the Ministry. The allocation per learner is $1,684.

- Contact hour cost varies widely across colleges and regions of the province, according to Ministry data. Costs range from a low of $5.02 seen in the north at Canadore College to a high of $9.33 seen in the west at Lambton College.

- The request for information on costs of other college programs received a limited response. Costs for Futures were provided by 5 colleges and are shown as $12.37. It should be noted that this program design differs form OBS in that a training allowance is paid to the learner. The cost of BTSD as reported by 7 colleges is $6.85 per learner contact hour which is very close that of OBS.

OCL

- The cost per learner contact hour from the questionnaire data is $6.25. This cost varies individually by age of program, as the newer programs (less than one year old) have costs in the order of $12 per contact hour.

- It is important to note that the total costs of OCL training are actually higher than this figure would suggest, because OCL groups receive approximately 70% of their funding from MSD. When funding from all sources is taken into account, total contact hour costs are closer to $8.70.

- The allocation per learner is in the order of $429, which is approximately one-quarter that of OBS.

OBSW

- The cost per contact hour of OBSW is approximately $13. This calculation does not take into account the Metro Labour Council program as they did not provide us with this information. In this context, the OBSW cost per contact hour is considerably higher than that seen in OBS and OCL. Allocation per learner was calculated to be $181 on average for OBSW projects.

7.2 PROGRAM CO-ORDINATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF ADEQUACY OF FUNDING

Colleges report inadequate resources constrain effectiveness

- 41% of colleges reported that they considered funding inadequate to cover teaching costs, 45% stated that it was insufficient for the costs of materials and 32% thought it insufficient to cover administration and overhead. In our interviews, colleges have pointed out that OBS is very "paper-intensive" and requires a considerable number of person-hours to administer.

- Colleges also reported on the impact of the fixed size of OBS operating budgets. 14 colleges saw a negative impact on class size, 10 on teacher layoffs, while 16 colleges thought it increased the inability of colleges to purchase materials and equipment. 11 colleges thought it might cause course cancellations, and 11 thought it would require a cut back in the level of support offered.

- The colleges report that inadequate funding affects them in three ways other than just being able to handle more students. First, they do not have enough resources to buy computers to provide the computer literacy component of OBS, and as a result that component of the program is not being delivered successfully. Second, the lack of resources is also forcing allocation decisions, in that the colleges will have to target particular groups. Colleges find it relatively more expensive to serve Basic level students and therefore will serve this group less. Third, colleges suggest that inadequate funding prevents them from conducting adequate outreach in many cases.

Community groups also find funding inadequate

- The lack of support allowances in the OCL program affects the ability of learners to participate in the program, particularly as OCL serves many basic level students who are from low-income households.

- Inadequate funding means that community groups have difficulty purchasing materials, and hiring paid instructors. 43% of the groups reported that funding was less than sufficient for teaching costs, 36% said it was insufficient for the costs of materials, and 49% suggested that it was insufficient for administration and overhead.

- Another concern raised is that receiving substantial MSD funding discourages other organizations from providing funds.

- OCL groups also believe that the money used for MSD literacy conferences should be allocated to the provision of services rather than conferences which have sometimes been poorly timed and poorly planned.

OBSW programs have fewer complaints regarding adequacy of funding

- Employer programs reported that they had received the total amount of funding which they requested.

- OBSW survey results support this level of satisfaction seen in our interviews. 82% of respondents felt that MSD funds were sufficient or better to cover teaching costs, 64% thought it sufficient to cover costs of materials, and 73% thought it sufficient to cover administration and overhead costs.

- When asked whether or not they would have provided the program without MSD funding, 8 of the 11 responding programs responded negatively. However, during our interviews, several employers reported that they would give this possibility serious consideration, given the benefits noticed in their particular workplaces during the programs first year.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1 MANY DEFINITIONS OF LITERACY

From the research we have carried out, it is clear that many of the program co-ordinators and those involved in delivering literacy training see literacy as a complex issue involving not only the integration of reading and writing skills, but also broader issues having to do with helping the learner adjust to day to day life or the demands of the workplace. The three programs in the field which we have examined evolved in somewhat different directions depending on their emphasis on reading, writing and numeracy skills, literacy demands of the workplace, or the literacy demands associated with every day life. It is evident that a certain degree of cultural support, social support and counseling, or supports to overcome learning disabilities are often necessary in all programs to retain learners in the programs and support the literacy objectives of the programs.

In our review of the literature on literacy and adult basic education, there were a number of different concepts and definitions of literacy which reflect the different approaches to literacy and basic education which are being adopted in Ontario. Clark[1] examines literacy and classifies these according to a number of categories. For example, traditional definitions focus on reading skills and focus on literacy as an end rather than a means. Kozol[2] uses the term *illiterate* to define those who are scarcely able to read, while the *semi-literate* is used to define those who are not able to read at levels equal to societal demands.

Often statistical definitions may be used as a proxy for literacy levels. Statistical definitions such as those used by the Canadian Association of Adult Education commonly use less than six years of schooling to describe basic illiteracy and less than nine years of schooling to define functional illiteracy. Clearly, grade levels do not necessarily measure reading levels. Also, grade levels are difficult to compare across different jurisdictions.

Functional definitions may focus on literacy as a means to an end and may include functions such as writing and calculation in addition to reading. These definitions may focus on the individual's ability to function in society. For example, the UNESCO[1] definitions are:

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[1] Roger A. Clark, "Definitions of Literacy: Implications for Policy and Practice", *Adult Literacy and Basic Education*, V.8, no. 3, 1984.
[2] Jonathon Kozol, *Illiterate America*, Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1985.

- a person is *illiterate* who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.
- a person is *functionally illiterate* who cannot engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing, and calculation for his own and the community's development.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO[2] defines *functional literacy* as that which enables the individual to handle the tasks of every day life.

Cairns[3] argues that education and skills are the real issues, "Debates about literacy and illiteracy which concentrate on levels of reading and writing are misleading; the real issue is whether people possess the education and skills necessary to participate fully and productively in the life of their society." Arguably, the levels of literacy required to participate in society may be different than those required to function in the workplace. In fact, these may evolve with time depending on the changing needs of the workplace or the competencies required to function in day to day life. Traditionally, governments have focused on the literacy needs of the workplace more than the needs of the society. There are also warnings in the literature which indicate that literacy cannot focus exclusively on skill acquisition. Studies have shown that 30% to 50% of all adult basic education students may have some form of learning disability.[4]

8.2 LITERACY DEFINITIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Depending on the concept of literacy which is adopted, there can be different implications for public policy. For example, proponents of the traditional approach which uses levels of reading and writing as the primary definition, tend to view the traditional public education model as the preferred method of delivering literacy training. The use of statistical definitions for public policy have the advantage of being easily measurable, but have the disadvantage of not being very reliable and not particularly useful in recognizing individual learner needs. Functional definitions which recognize an individual's capacity to function are appealing, but are considerably more difficult to measure at the societal level. Functional literacy levels can also be highly individual from one learner need to the next depending on each person's literacy needs. The use of these definitions for public policy is similar in many respects to the concept of 'learner centred models' which are adopted by the community groups. From a public policy perspective, the use of functional definitions tends to correspond with more diversified approaches to literacy training which do not rely solely on the traditional educational model. While the use of functional definitions may present difficulties in measurement, they can be useful in policy formulation in that they recognize that different groups may have different literacy related needs.

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[1] *1978 UNESCO Revised Recommendations concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics.*

[2] *Adult Illiteracy in Canada — A Challenge*, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Occasional Paper 42, Summer 1983.

[3] Ibid. p. 3.

[4] G.H. Wright, from an unpublished paper, 1987.

While never explicitly stated, it appears that the programs under review have evolved in somewhat different directions reflecting some of the different philosophical approaches to literacy reflected in the above definitions. The OBS program tends to be designed somewhat along the traditional educational model to impart reading, writing, and numeracy skills in the traditional sense using a highly educational model, with the ultimate goal of further training or a job for the individual learner. Alternatively, the OCL program with its 'learner centred model' focuses more on the needs of the individual functioning in day to day life: a job or further training need not necessarily result. On the other hand, the OCL participant is more likely to be exposed to the reading requirements associated with highly personal objectives such as the skills required to perform personal banking and shopping. For some learners, the use of the traditional educational model may be counter-productive, since many learners have strong negative attitudes associated with the traditional educational approach. The OCL groups argue strongly that the individual needs of the learner must be assessed in evaluating achievement.

There are different approaches concerning how governments should address literacy in the community. One approach argues that literacy outside the workplace (or social literacy) is largely a personal matter and that these programs are best provided by the community with minimal intervention from government.[1] From this perspective, there are relatively few demands on the learner-tutor relationship, the success of the program hinges largely on the participants' satisfaction with the programs. An alternative approach is based on the assumption that expenditures of public funds require accountability and that groups should be able to show improvements in reading and numeracy levels of their learners as a result of the expenditures. From this perspective, it is appropriate to demand that literacy skills be significantly improved in addition to other goals which are being achieved by the programs. In this case, the concept of a learner centred model should encompass some form of assessment which tracks the performance of individuals as they proceed through their program. Many learners themselves also wish to know how they are progressing over time.

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[1] M.B. Wallace, *Defining Adult Literacy: A Discussion Paper*, Access Policy Section, Ministry of Skills Development, 1988.

The OBSW model is relatively new and still in its evolutionary stages. The literacy needs which have been addressed have evolved to meet the needs of the employers in each workplace setting. In many of the workplaces where the model has been implemented, the training has been oriented to the use of English in the workplace for those who do not have English as their mother tongue. The training materials and the instruction have been oriented to the needs of each workplace setting. The OBSW program, however, has not evolved solely to meet the ESL type of training need. The unions have also developed programs which have addressed the literacy and basic skills needs of those for whom English is the mother tongue. There is clearly a demand for both types of training. While there has not been a great deal of pure literacy training which has taken place yet under OBSW, this may be because of the infancy of the program and lack of awareness among employers.

All the above approaches to literacy are valid from a philosophical standpoint. However, the focus of program delivery can vary to the extent that literacy and numeracy training are the primary focus of the OBS program, ESL type training is a strong emphasis of OBSW, and the OCL programs with their individualistic approach to literacy may see literacy and numeracy objectives as going hand in hand with notions of self-betterment and societal integration of the learner. The community groups' orientation to the workplace is not part of their perceived mandates. Employment or improvement of the job skills of the learner may, however, result and the study results show that learners place more emphasis on these goals than the program co-ordinators would appear to realize.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the different programs, it is important to recognize these different approaches to literacy. The common purpose of literacy programs is to increase learners' reading and numeracy abilities over time. If the Ministry acknowledges that the development of reading and numeracy skills are key goals, it must design the programs and develop measures to maximize and assess progress in order to ensure that its objectives are being achieved.

As has been discussed, literacy training can be very effective if the materials are oriented to the needs of the individual learner. On this score, the community groups perform well. Further, considerable practice time by the learner must be undertaken for substantial literacy gains to occur. While co-ordinators can cite specific examples where individuals also work hard on their own, there is no evidence to suggest that this is common throughout the programs. While some gain is occurring, it would not appear to be more than one or two grade gains on average based on the time learners are spending in the programs. These improvements in literacy are likely to be most useful if it takes the learner to the stage where he or she can become functionally literate or to the stage where the individual can become eligible for entry to a job or further training (i.e., grades 8 to 10 for apprenticeship type training or grade 12 for further post-secondary training). In order for substantial improvements in literacy to occur, there must be a concerted attempt to retain learners in all the literacy programs.

Although representatives of all three programs claim that individual participants are monitored and assessed in terms of their progress at reading and writing, there is no evidence that such monitoring and assessment is applied on a consistent basis across the programs, or that any such assessments are sent to the Ministry in any useful format. In the absence of such assessments, the proxy we have used to assess whether substantial gains in literacy have occurred has been the use of 100 hours of practice time which is considered necessary to achieve one grade gain equivalent at reading. Clearly, this is not a hard and fast rule which should be applied to assess the progress of participants, but merely a guide to judge the increase in literacy levels of participants. Research has shown that this practice time can be reduced considerably if learning materials are matched to the needs of the learner, if learners' practice using the materials that they will use in the future and if teachers and tutors are readily available to clarify misunderstandings.

All three programs have strengths and weaknesses in terms of their literacy accomplishments. Many of the different approaches meet different sets of needs, it is not possible to deliver literacy training solely through one model. For example, certain groups such as francophone and native learners advocated strongly that they have unique literacy and basic training needs which are culturally specific and require special approaches. From the Ministry's perspective, the issue is to co-ordinate and control the different approaches while ensuring that substantial literacy training is taking place. The possibility of co-ordination of different groups is strongest in the urban centres where there are a number of different organizations engaged in delivering literacy programs. The Ministry must also ensure that groups in remote areas have access to literacy programs in line with their own needs.

8.3 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR ALL PROGRAMS

- Design programs to encourage learners and participants to maximize their time engaged in the programs and in actually doing reading.
- Develop simple materials for very basic needs. These should include more real world and work-related materials and applications.
- Improve the quality of materials for all literacy programs and its orientation to the future needs of the individual. Businesses could be approached to fund the development of such materials and there would likely be good demand for these materials by all organizations.
- Provide training materials to instructors on up-to-date methods of teaching literacy and basis skills.
- Increase reading as a component of all programs, both during the instruction time and as a supplement when not engaged in instruction.
- Develop mechanisms to detect and assess those with learning disabilities and to design programs to meet their needs. Training programs should also be developed to assist program co-ordinators and others engaged in literacy training to assist in identifying these specialist needs.
- Develop materials and methods to assess and measure literacy and numeracy levels at entry and at periodic intervals in all programs. The assessment need not be a formal 'test'. (These materials could be similar to the kinds of tests which were developed for the Southam study.) Most of the participants we interviewed did not express any aversion to testing and most were interested in determining the literacy levels they were at. This information should be provided in a meaningful format to

the Ministry and the reports should be available to the organizations engaged in the literacy training.

- Develop organizational mechanisms to co-ordinate the delivery of literacy training to the local level in areas where there are a number of organizations engaged in providing literacy training. In areas where this has occurred, organizations have been successful in working together to provide more cost-effective training to some groups or in complementing the provision of services to some groups or in simply learning from each other.

Suggested Improvements for OBS

- Encourage more reading which is job-related. (e.g., journals, manuals, charts, memos, correspondence, forms from the workplace, textbooks similar to future classes, etc. Employers can also be asked to contribute materials.) This can be facilitated with no changes to class size. The students can be encouraged to do work in their own interest areas, for example, for one day each week or for a portion of a day. This can be facilitated with no changes to class size. The involvement of local businesses also serves to provide employers with an understanding of the services and capabilities of the colleges.

- Explore ways of increasing student access to volunteer tutors.

Suggested Improvements for OCL

- For the benefit of both OCL participants and the Ministry, the learners need to have some form of monitoring and assessment process which needs to be applied on a consistent basis to track the programs and the learner's progress. There are a number of different assessment tools which are relatively simple, not threatening and which could be used by the programs.

Suggested Improvements for OBSW

- Encourage more long term training by using trained tutors in the workplace.

- Encourage shared employer/employee time model.

- Improve marketing of program, perhaps through CITC and industry associations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Ministry of Skills Development

Jan Rush
Anne Martin
Walter Tuohy
Linda Pergantes
Peter Lloyd
Dan Patterson
Bill Wolfson
Gerry Wright
Betty Butterworth
Richard Hudon
Arthur Bull
Marion Dick
Joyce King
Norman Black
Maureen Perlmutter
Richard Tillman
Barbara Shields
Claude Decelles
Mary-Beth Wallace

Ministry of Education

Lloyd Thompson

Community Colleges (OBS)

Jamie Riddell, Algonquin College
Canadore College
Tom McCaul, Centennial College
Marg Smith, Conestoga College
Nancy, Singleton, Confederation College
Jeanette Barrett, Durham College
Kay Singh, George Brown College
Maureen Watt, Georgian College
Cindy Niemi, Humber College
Lambton College
Lois Thompson, Loyalist College
Mohawk College
Suzanne Arnedt, Niagara College
Fran Sahler, Northern College
Tony Hanlon, Sault College
Dan Phillips, Seneca College
Barbara Wood, Sheridan College
Bud Robertson, Sir Sandford Fleming College
St. Clair College

Fanshawe College

Community Groups (OCL)

Anne Ladouceur, Comite Consultatif de Langue Francaise
Tracy Westell, Elisse Zack, Ontario Literacy Coalition
Terry Wright, Laubach Literacy
Bruce Kapel, Frontier College
Kathleen Fornier, Metropolitan Toronto Literacy Movement
ACFO, Thunder Bay
Mary Anderson, Thunder Bay Literacy Coalition
Claire Leveque, Alpha, Toronto
Kim Anderson, Native Women's Resource Centre
Norma Jean Taylor, Canadian Hearing Society
Jackie Wilson, Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
Pat Samekese, Thunder Bay Indian youth Friendship Society
Betsy Alkenbridge, East End Literacy
London and Region Learning and Resource Centre
Nokee Kwe Occupational Skill Development Ltd.
Tim Wood, Fort Frances Volunteer Bureau
Kathy Neil, John Howard Society, Lindsay
Deseronto, First Nations
Beth Hovius, Hamilton Public Library
Caryanne Arnold, Kingston Literacy
Marnie Chauvan, Focus on Learning (Wawa)
Margaret Shier, Newmarket Literacy Council
Ron Peters, Ontario Native Literacy Coalition
Darlene Robb, Program Read Sault Ste. Marie
Florence Gray, Indian Friendship Centre
Mrs. Laganiere, La Magie des Lettres
Hamilton and District Literacy Council
Richard Kamalatsit, Ojibway-Cree Cultural Centre
Rosemary Newman, Timmins Literacy Council
Helene Sirois, L'ACFO regionale de Timmins
Tracy Westell, Parkdale Project Read
Linda Frampton, Students Who Help Students

OBSW Sponsors

Bruce Lauzon, Cumins Recon Canada
Lyne Gregory, Teachers of English as a Second Language
Julie White, Great Northern Apparel
Laurie Wright, Karmax
Esther Lee, L'Hotel
Leona Thompson, Women Training for Employment
Ron Jeske, Normark Manufacturing
Jose Quiroz, Beck Electric
K. Meyer, Catelectric-Dip
Dawn Muir, Westmet Stamping
Sonya Sippley, Speedex
Anne Watkinson, Delphax Systems
Peter Kennis, Union Salt

Beth McCue, Fujima International
Karen Sullivan, Polyrim
W. Soete, Downsview Stamping
Rob Gaby, Creative Mechanical Technology
I. Wolf, Allwood Products
W. Agustoni, Speedex Manufacturing
Cici Waugh, Toronto Airport Hilton
Jim Turk, Ontario Federation of Labour
Brenda Wall, Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto
Hamilton and District Labour Council

APPENDIX II
THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN LITERACY IN ONTARIO

The Government of the Province of Ontario in June, 1986 established the Government Plan for Adult Basic Literacy to address the problem of adult illiteracy in Ontario. The plan addressed illiteracy as a problem which prevented adults from:

- obtaining employment and becoming self-sufficient;
- participating in occupational health and safety programs, and;
- learning English as a second language.

As the basis of the plan, the Cabinet adopted a series of principles which outlined the goals of government policy in the literacy and basic skills area. Government literacy programs were established with the following objectives:

- to improve adult literacy consistent with the government's objective to encourage full, equal and responsible citizenship among the residents of Ontario, and to encourage employment and economic growth;
- to facilitate identification and recognition of individual needs, by providing information dissemination, outreach and counselling;
- to provide for the needs of special groups by ensuring broad access to literacy services, as well as customized programs to meet the specific needs of such groups;
- to ensure that there were no gaps or duplication within the overall the umbrella of literacy and basic skills programs, and that there be sufficient integration between programs to allow individual learners to advance progressively in terms of their literacy skills;
- to provide literacy services in both official languages, English and French, in accordance with the French Language Services Act, 1986.

Within the context of this plan five Ministries were involved in the provision of literacy and basic skills programs: Citizenship and Culture, Education, Skills Development, Colleges and Universities and Correctional Services. In 1987, the Ministry of Skills Development (MSD) inherited the lead role for literacy from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, in addition to a number of literacy programs it was already funding, now totaling approximately $40 million.

TABLE 1

ONTARIO NON-LITERATE POPULATION VS. MSD LITERACY PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

COMPARISONS BY CHARACTERISTIC

CHARACTERISTIC	*ONTARIO**	*OBS*	*DIFFERENCE OBS-ONT*	*OCL*	*DIFFERENCE OCL-ONT*	*OBSW***	*DIFFERENCE OBSW-ONT*	*PARTICIPANT SURVEY****	*DIFFERENCE PARTIC-ONT*
EDUCATION									
Less than Gr. 5	7%	12%	5%	25%	18%	15%	8%	10%	3%
Gr.5-8	33%	26%	-7%	35%	2%	69%	36%	20%	-13%
Some High School	28%	44%	16%	29%	1%	16%	-12%	59%	31%
Gr12+	32%	19%	-13%	11%	-21%	0%	-32%	10%	-22%
ETHNIC ORIGIN									
ENGLISH	41%	52%	11%	55%	14%	7%	-34%	47%	6%
FRENCH	12%	7%	-5%	7%	-5%	1%	-11%	10%	-2%
OTHER WESTERN EUROPE	25%	14%	-11%	11%	-14%	23%	-2%	17%	-8%
NATIVE INDIAN	1%	3%	2%	10%	9%	7%	6%	6%	5%
OTHER	22%	24%	2%	17%	-5%	62%	40%	20%	-2%
LANGUAGE FIRST SPOKEN									
ENGLISH	63%	65%	2%	70%	7%	6%	-57%	64%	1%
FRENCH	8%	8%	0%	7%	-1%	0%	-8%	9%	1%
OTHER	29%	26%	-3%	23%	-6%	94%	65%	25%	-4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS									
EMPLOYED PT/FT	46%	39%	-7%	44%	-2%	91%	45%	48%	2%
UNEMPLOYED	54%	61%	7%	56%	2%	9%	-45%	51%	-3%
SHORT TERM (UI)	-	11%	-	9%	-	91%	-	5%	-
LONG TERM (SAR)	-	25%	-	24%	-	9%	-	22%	-
OTHER UNEMPLOYED	-	25%	-	22%	-	1%	-	26%	-
DISABILITY									
MENTAL/LEARNING	3%	4%	1%	8%	5%	-	-	-	-
PHYSICAL^	25%	5%	-20%	3%	-22%	-	-	-	-
HEALTH RELATED^^	9%	3%	6%	2%	-7%	-	-	-	-
ANY OF THE ABOVE	25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	19%	-6%
OTHER GROUPS									
SOLE SUPPORT MOTHERS		15%		5%		0%			
SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS		12%		13%		-			
UNDEREMPLOYED		12%		8%		1%			
FROM REMOTE/ISOLATED AREAS		3%		2%		0%			
EX-OFFENDERS		-		3%		-			
VISIBLE MINORITIES		26%		25%		66%			

* Source: Literacy in Ontario, Creative Research Group, June, 1988
** Note: Sample size is eleven OBSW programs
*** Figures may not add due to "not stated" responses
^ Includes physical disability, eye trouble, speech, hearing problem
^^For Ontario, defined as long term illness of 6 months or more

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APPENDIX III

LITERACY TRAINING NEEDS OF SPECIFIC POPULATION GROUPS

A number of special population groups in the study receive literacy training through one or more of the Ministry's literacy programs. The following are a number of issues which have emerged from the study which policy makers must take into account when delivering services to these groups. Each section addresses the distributions of each population group in each of the programs, some of the barriers which were identified in recruitment or attraction of these individuals and some of the program outcomes of each group relative to the sample as a whole. The information in this section is based on a combination of surveys and interviews, which are identified. It should be noted that the groups are not mutually exclusive. Individuals can obviously fall into more than one of the following categories.

In the following sections, we address some of the concerns specifically related to:

- Social assistance recipients (SAR)
- Sole support mothers
- The disabled
- Basic level learners
- Francophones
- Native Peoples
- Second language learners

Table 1 provides a summary of those individuals who are participating in each of the programs as reported from the questionnaires of program co-ordinators and compares these profiles with the population of all non-literates.[1] Table 3 provides a summary of the

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[1] *Literacy in Ontario*, The Creative Research Group, prepared for the Ministry of Skills Development, June, 1988. This was a reanalysis of the study for the Province of Ontario, *literacy in Canada*, conducted on behalf of Southam News.

TABLE 3

MOTIVATION AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES BY SPECIAL GROUP

	TOTAL	ODS	OCL	OSSW	MALE	FEMALE	EMPLOY FT	EMPLOY PT	NOT EMPLOY	< GRADE 9	> GRADE 9	DISABLED	ENGLISH	FRENCH	NATIVE	OTHER
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	539	357	172	10	179	360	179	80	278	166	373	100	252	56	34	191
REASON FOR TAKING TRAINING																
TO GET A JOB	19%	23%	11%	0%	17%	19%	17%	14%	20%	18%	20%	25%	20%	27%	15%	15%
TO GET A BETTER JOB	17%	21%	9%	20%	21%	15%	17%	23%	18%	18%	17%	14%	18%	16%	3%	19%
TO GET A HIGHER PAY RATE	3%	3%	2%	0%	5%	2%	4%	4%	2%	4%	2%	3%	4%	2%	0%	3%
TO UPGRADE JOB SKILLS	24%	28%	17%	60%	22%	24%	28%	21%	24%	18%	28%	32%	27%	24%	27%	19%
TO SATISFY EMPLOYER	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	0%	0%	1%
TO TAKE OTHER TRAINING	20%	20%	9%	0%	20%	20%	14%	25%	23%	11%	24%	20%	22%	16%	29%	17%
FOR SELF BETTERMENT	44%	33%	69%	30%	46%	43%	48%	48%	42%	54%	40%	42%	48%	38%	47%	41%
OTHER	24%	24%	26%	20%	26%	25%	24%	18%	27%	26%	24%	21%	18%	38%	24%	29%
DID NOT STAY UNTIL END OF TRAINING	32%	36%	24%	10%	29%	33%	36%	30%	27%	28%	34%	30%	31%	40%	27%	33%
REASON DID NOT STAY UNTIL END																
GOT A JOB	19%	23%	7%	100%	20%	20%	40%	13%	5%	18%	20%	7%	21%	27%	11%	18%
TOOK OTHER TRAINING	18%	23%	6%	0%	20%	18%	14%	23%	19%	2%	24%	23%	18%	9%	33%	19%
LOST INTEREST/OTHER	61%	55%	81%	0%	59%	62%	48%	60%	72%	75%	60%	67%	60%	64%	56%	63%
LOST INTEREST/OTHER AS % OF TOTAL	19%	20%	19%	0%	17%	21%	17%	23%	20%	21%	19%	20%	18%	25%	15%	20%
AFTER TRAINING, DID FURTHER TRAINING	51%	59%	36%	30%	47%	54%	37%	63%	60%	46%	53%	60%	58%	61%	38%	49%
HELPED OR WILL HELP GET A JOB	58%	53%	67%	100%	60%	57%	62%	48%	58%	56%	59%	64%	59%	56%	58%	58%
ALLOWED(WILL ALLOW) YOU TO BE PROMOTED	39%	34%	49%	50%	46%	36%	51%	30%	32%	38%	40%	43%	41%	35%	35%	40%
INCREASED OR WILL INCREASE YOUR INCOME	48%	40%	56%	70%	48%	45%	56%	45%	41%	46%	48%	49%	47%	38%	47%	48%
HELPED(WILL HELP) ACCESS FURTHER TRAINING	76%	76%	76%	90%	77%	74%	74%	71%	78%	72%	[illegible]	76%	70%	60%	71%	77%
THE COURSE WAS OF NO BENEFIT	6%	6%	6%	0%	5%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%	[illegible]	7%	6%	9%	3%	6%
METHOD OF TRAINING RECEIVED																
GROUP(8 OR MORE)	21%	29%	8%	30%	23%	20%	19%	19%	23%	16%	9%	27%	21%	22%	12%	23%
GROUP (LESS THAN 8)	6%	6%	4%	20%	2%	7%	2%	5%	6%	6%	3%	2%	6%	0%	21%	4%
ONE ON ONE	44%	24%	88%	0%	62%	40%	68%	46%	37%	62%	24%	44%	44%	40%	41%	48%
SELF LEARNING	34%	46%	10%	0%	25%	30%	20%	35%	30%	19%	23%	31%	30%	44%	38%	28%
CLASSROOM	40%	54%	12%	50%	39%	41%	31%	30%	40%	29%	24%	46%	43%	30%	47%	42%
METHOD OF TRAINING PREFERRED																
GROUP(8 OR MORE)	8%	11%	1%	30%	10%	8%	7%	5%	10%	6%	9%	11%	11%	6%	3%	7%
GROUP (LESS THAN 8)	4%	3%	4%	20%	2%	4%	2%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	3%	0%	18%	3%
ONE ON ONE	34%	13%	82%	0%	48%	28%	48%	37%	26%	56%	24%	34%	31%	41%	50%	37%
SELF LEARNING	20%	20%	3%	0%	13%	23%	14%	26%	22%	7%	24%	17%	22%	31%	9%	14%
CLASSROOM	24%	32%	6%	60%	23%	28%	18%	22%	29%	20%	24%	27%	24%	18%	18%	29%
WAYS TRAINING HAS HELPED																
CAN READ BETTER	24%	13%	47%	10%	31%	21%	29%	20%	21%	36%	18%	28%	28%	18%	29%	24%
CAN WRITE BETTER	9%	7%	14%	20%	12%	8%	12%	6%	8%	14%	8%	7%	9%	4%	9%	13%
HELPED IN GETTING (FUTURE) JOB	6%	6%	5%	0%	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	3%	7%	6%	5%	11%	9%	6%
SELF CONFIDENCE/ESTEEM/WORTH	32%	34%	29%	20%	21%	30%	29%	36%	33%	29%	33%	36%	33%	34%	29%	37%

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motivations for taking the training and program outcomes for the special groups based on the results of the telephone survey of participants.

Social Assistance Recipients

Long term unemployed social assistance recipients (SAR) account for 25% of OBS learners, 24% of OCL learners and 9% of OBSW participants. The OBSW social assistance recipients are all in union programs.

The individual who is a social assistance recipient (SAR) potentially has a number of barriers preventing him or her from receiving training. Interviews with program co-ordinators indicated there are a number of barriers which it is necessary to overcome in order to encourage more social assistance recipients to receive sustained long term training with a successful employment outcome. Many have not been in the labour force at all or for long periods of time. They may suffer from lack of self confidence in addition to other technical skills. It is necessary to supplement their literacy training with some job preparation training but many of the colleges do not feel that the 25 hours of Training Readiness time is sufficient for those who particularly need this training.

The SAR is also confronted with a somewhat daunting outlook when one considers that the benefits obtained through employment may not be worth it to the individual in terms of the time involved, the prospect of possibly a low paying job and the prospect that the individual may not be financially better off with employment when one considers the non-monetary benefits (e.g., public housing and drug benefits, etc.) which the SAR would potentially lose with employment. Colleges cited the lack of financial assistance as a barrier affecting recruitment (41%) or retention (77%) of learners. The lack of financial assistance was identified as a barrier by 15% of the community groups. In addition, 18% of the community groups identified the lack of transportation or the cost of transportation as a barrier. 23% of the colleges identified the lack of living allowances or income support to be barriers affecting the ability to recruit individuals. This problem is likely to be most severe for the SAR's relative to other non-literates. To this must be added the need to find adequate day care (which is usually not available through the OCL groups) and the emotional trauma of risking to change an entrenched lifestyle.

The survey of program co-ordinators showed that many of the colleges do not have very good data regarding the whereabouts and employment status of individuals who leave the programs. The colleges report that approximately 31% of those who exit have employment or a confirmed prospect, 11% are seeking employment, 11% are seeking further training, and 9% are not seeking training. Approximately 38% of the OBS program participants have an unknown employment status at exit. The OCL groups report that approximately 13% of those unemployed obtained employment at exit and another 13% were seeking further training.

The survey of program participants showed that the unemployed are very similar to the sample as a whole in terms of motivations for taking the training and the outcomes of the training programs (see Table 3). The unemployed are somewhat less likely to drop out than for the sample as a whole (27% for those not employed as compared with 35% for the full-time employed and 38% for the part-time employed.) Of those not employed who dropped out of the programs, only 19% did so in order to take other training.

Those not employed tended to prefer classroom training (29%) more than the sample as a whole (24%). It is possible that this may reflect the views of those in the OBS programs. It is also possible that the unemployed may appreciate being in a training environment shared with others in the same circumstances. Some in the colleges noted strong friendships forming amongst some of the learners and it is possible that this peer effect is important in contributing to long term success in training.

Sole Support Mothers

Sole support mothers are served in both OBS (15%) and OCL (5%). The OBSW program is also serving a considerable number of sole support mothers in its union programs. It is likely that many of these are also SAR's. In addition to the barriers identified above, many sole support mothers must also find child care support. The OBS program makes funds available for child care and transportation, whereas the community groups usually do not have access to these funds. Even with funding available, in some communities, there may not be enough spaces available for children of OBS learners. Lack of day care facilities was identified as a barrier affecting retention of learners by 41% of the colleges and 12% of the community groups. There is a significant difference between a woman who has been employed and decides to upgrade as a result of a job layoff, for example, and a woman who has been a full-time homemaker and is required to upgrade because of a separation. In the latter case, the woman may not have been in the labour force for a substantial period of time and her personal confidence must be developed in addition to her technical and academic skills. It is interesting to note that issues relating to self confidence, self esteem or self worth were identified as ways the training has helped by 39% of the women participants as compared with only 21% of the males.

A number of the colleges do not feel that they do a particularly good job of encouraging women to enter non-traditional careers. For the sole support mother who is a social assistance recipient, therefore, the likelihood of these individuals finding employment in higher paying jobs may be limited.

To balance the above perspective, we also were informed that there are large numbers of women in the OBS program who may have experienced a life change such as a separation which had caused them to enter the program. Many of these women were dedicating considerable time to the program and clearly have found ways to overcome the barriers identified above.

The Disabled

Those with mental/learning disabilities are served in OBS (3%) and OCL (8%). This compares with a figure of 3% for Ontario. 36% of the colleges report that they have been seeing an increase in the number of individuals who are mentally disabled in the OBS programs. All groups indicated that they had difficulty identifying the learning disabled and delivering services to these individuals. This becomes a particularly serious issue considering research which indicates that as many as 30% to 50% of all basic level adult learners have some forms of learning disability. These individuals may also have other disabilities such as perceptual handicaps which interfere with their ability to read or communicate. Because the community groups are more able to deliver one on one or small group training, they are more involved in delivering training to the learning disabled than are the community colleges. Many of the groups contacted did not feel well equipped or trained to deliver services to these learners. The problem becomes especially severe in parts of the province that do not have access to special resources to provide training to these groups. These individuals also require considerable support and confidence building to supplement their literacy training. They may also be social assistance recipients and have a variety of needs and barriers which must be addressed.

The physically disabled account for 5% of OBS and 3% of OCL learners. In addition, those with health related disabilities make up 3% of OBS and 2% of OCL learners. A high proportion of Ontario's non-literate population (25%) is physically disabled. Physical access and the costs of special transportation to many of the programs (especially those offered by the community groups) is a barrier which interferes with delivery of training to the disabled. The Ministry is aware of this problem and has undertaken a survey of the access needs of the OCL programs and their learners. Persons with disabilities also may not have employment experience and require assistance in a number of areas in addition to strictly literacy training if the goal is to encourage them to join the labour force.

The participant survey allowed for a comparison of those who identified themselves as disabled with the sample as a whole. Many of the disabled appeared to have taken the training for job related reasons more than for the entire sample. 25% of the disabled individuals indicated they had taken the training to get a job as compared with 19% for the sample as a whole and 32% of the disabled took their literacy training to upgrade their job skills as compared with 24% for the whole sample. 60% of the disabled took other training after their literacy training as compared with only 51% for the entire sample.

Basic Level Learners

Those who have an education less than grade 5 account for 12% of OBS learners, 25% of OCL learners and 15% of OBSW trainees. Those with less than grade 9 account for 38% of OBS, 60% of OCL, and 84% of OBSW. The OCL groups claim that they serve a more basic level of learner than the OBS groups which is borne out by the data.

64% of the colleges reported they are experiencing increases in the numbers of basic level students and 55% reported they are receiving more totally illiterate in the programs. In our interviews it was suggested that this group was more costly to deliver services to in the colleges because class sizes needed to be smaller. Both the colleges and the community groups reported that it is difficult to find learning materials which are adequate for the needs of the basic level learner.

There are some differences which emerge when comparing the motivations and program outcomes of learners with less than grade 9 with the profile of learners who have grade 9 or higher. Only 15% of those with less than grade 9 report that getting a job was the reason for taking the training as compared with 20% for those with grade 9 or more. In general, those with with higher levels of education take the training more for reasons related to upgrading (26% compared to 18% for basic level learner) or to take other training (24% as compared to 11% for the basic learner. 54% of those with less than grade 9 took the training for self betterment and related reasons as compared with only 40% of those with grade 9 or more.

The basic level learners tended to take the training until the end (28%) as compared with 34% for the more advanced learners. The basic level individual who drops out of the program is much less likely to have done so because of a job or because of further training. Basic level learners expressed a preference for one on one type of training (63%) as compared with only 24% for those with higher levels of education.

Basic level learners were more likely to identify the improvement of their reading skills (38%) as a way the program had helped them in comparison with those with higher levels of education (18%). Interestingly, only 29% of the basic level learners reported that the training had increased their self confidence as compared with 33% of the more advanced level learners.

Francophone Groups

Many of the francophone groups are in the initial stages of developing french literacy training programs and have not had the experience of longer running programs. Those who have french as their first language spoken represented 8% of OBS, and 7% of OCL participants, as compared with 8% of the non-literate population. There were no individuals with french as their first language in OBSW programs. Those organizing the francophone programs indicated that the francophones preferred a group approach to literacy training as opposed to the one on one approach used by many of the anglophone programs. The francophone groups also differ in their approach to development of OCL literacy training programs with their use of needs assessment studies to contact prospective learners and assess the demand for literacy training. In our interviews, we explored the linkages between the community groups and the college programs. It was suggested by some of the francophone program co-ordinators that the francophone community did not always perceive that the colleges had met their needs well in some communities.

Program co-ordinators representing francophone groups perceive the need for french literacy training as part of a broader initiative to preserve and develop their own cultural traditions and institutions. Many of the francophone population are in eastern and northern Ontario. Some programs may be remote from built up communities and may require more funds to deliver services and cover transportation costs. The economies in these areas may be largely resource based and subject to fluctuations causing layoffs and the need for retraining. These areas may not have good employment prospects in the event of economic downturn. Some of these groups perceive the need for french literacy training as a response to failings in the institutional education system which historically did not provide adequate access to french language training. They require more materials which are relevant to their own cultural and linguistic background.

Many of the francophone participants[1] indicated that job related reasons had motivated them to take the literacy training. 27% of francophone learners interviewed in the participant survey indicated that they took the literacy training to get a job as compared with 19% for the sample as a whole. Only 38% of francophone learners indicated they took the training for reasons related to self betterment as compared with 44% for the sample as a whole. 40% of the francophones did not stay until the end of their training as compared with 32% for the entire sample. Of these, 27% stopped taking the training because they received a job. When asked about the ways the training had helped them, 11% indicated that helped or will help in getting a future job as compared with only 6% for the sample as a whole. Notwithstanding the use of group training in the francophone programs, those francophone participants interviewed expressed a preference for one on one training (41%) as compared with only 34% for the sample.

Native Peoples

Native peoples receiving literacy training are primarily in community group programs (10%) rather than in college OBS programs (3%). Program co-ordinators indicated that many native learners have had negative experiences with institutional training. The native groups are also in the early stages of developing literacy training programs and have not had the benefit of long term experience. The native groups argue that they have cultural traditions which must be respected in delivering literacy training. These traditions have an impact on the program in a variety of ways. For example, a number of individuals have indicated that native peoples learn from observation and experience rather than through instruction. Some have indicated that it is necessary to use cultural programming (e.g., native dance) to encourage individuals to enter the program prior to delivering literacy training programs.

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[1] In the participant survey, results were cross-tabulated by those individuals who indicated that french was their cultural background.

Some of the program co-ordinators have indicated that it is difficult to deliver services on reservations because individuals may not wish to be seen to require these services. Because the numbers of people likely to attend on a reservation is likely to be small, it is unlikely that the economics of these programs is likely to be as cost effective as other literacy programs in Ontario. Some of the urban native literacy programs have more success but attendance may be sporadic because native individuals in urban areas may be transient and leave these areas at certain times of the year. Some of the urban native persons served may also have a number of other social problems which must be addressed in addition to literacy needs. The native program co-ordinators have often made considerable efforts to locate individuals through home visits or establishing training programs in institutions with high numbers of natives. Our interviews indicated that many native men particularly with literacy training needs are reticent to admit this and are difficult to attract to the programs. Program co-ordinators also indicated difficulty obtaining native peoples who would assist as volunteer tutors. Many of the learners and program co-ordinators expressed an interest in obtaining more materials which were relevant to their own culture. Also, the literacy training was a second language for some of these learners who had been brought up with native languages as their first tongue.

Of the native learners interviewed, 29% indicated that they had taken the literacy training in order to take other training as compared with only 20% who said this for the entire sample. The rate of attrition for the learners interviewed was lower (27%) than for the sample as a whole (32%). Of those who dropped out, 11% got a job and 33% indicated they had gone on to take other training. 29% of those native peoples interviewed indicated they can read better as compared with only 24% for the entire sample.

Second Language Learners

A number of individuals in the study did not have English or French as their first language and were receiving literacy training. This included 26% of OBS, 23% of OCL, and 94% of OBSW learners. Some colleges particularly in the Metro Toronto area reported that they are receiving more English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Second Dialect (ESD) type learners. Generally, ESL type training has a strong oral and written component and can require considerable amounts of grammar type training. The boundary between the individual who needs literacy training versus ESL type training is not always clear. While colleges may refer ESL learners to other places, there is sometimes a gap especially with the advanced ESL type learner who may not be suitable for any of the programs. OBS is not supposed to be training ESL type learners, however, these learners may end up in OBS programs with no program exactly suitable to their needs. 55% of the colleges reported that they are seeing more of the post ESL type learner than they have in the past. Language was identified as a barrier by 5% of the OCL groups.

A comparison of the profile of those participants whose cultural background was not english, french or native shows these individuals to be relatively similar to the sample as a whole. 13% of these individuals indicated that they could write better as compared with only 9% for the entire sample. 37% reported increases in self confidence as a result of the training as compared with 32% for the sample.